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A Chinatown Tragedy;

Or, THE MYSTERY OF A GIRL'S MURDER

By G. T. Hargreaves

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CHAPTER I.

THE MISSING DAUGHTER.

WITH a reputation for remarkable and brilliant detective ability established through his rapid and complete solutions of the Broad Street murder mystery and the one hundred thousand dollar Philpot jewel robbery, Phil Pry, plain reporter who won his way up from an unpromising orphanage to a position of distinction in the newspaper world, sat comfortably ensconced in a chair in the editorial rooms of the Daily Star, his feet elevated to a neighboring desk and his eyes buried in a copy of the morning paper.

Suddenly glancing down a column of commonplace personal notices his attention was held by this one:

"Alice—Please come home at once. We have hunted you in the usual places for a week. Your mother is prostrated."

"That one reads some out of the ordinary," thought Phil Pry. "I shouldn't be a bit surprised if there was an unusual story behind those few lines."

As he glanced over them again, an office boy hurried up.

"Mr. Gee, the managing editor, wants to see you at once, Mr. Pry," the sharp-eyed lad said. "I was to tell you as soon as you came in."

"All right," responded Pry, and followed by the admiring glances of other members of the Star staff, the reporter who had won almost a national fame in a single year strode down the long room and disappeared into the private sanctum of the man who guided the destinies of a great New York daily paper.

Mr. Gee, serious faced, looked up over his glasses at Pry.

"Ah, I'm glad," he said. "I think I've got another enigma for you to unravel."

Pry sank into a seat in front of his superior.

"The tougher the better," he said quietly.

"Phil, do you speak Chinese?"

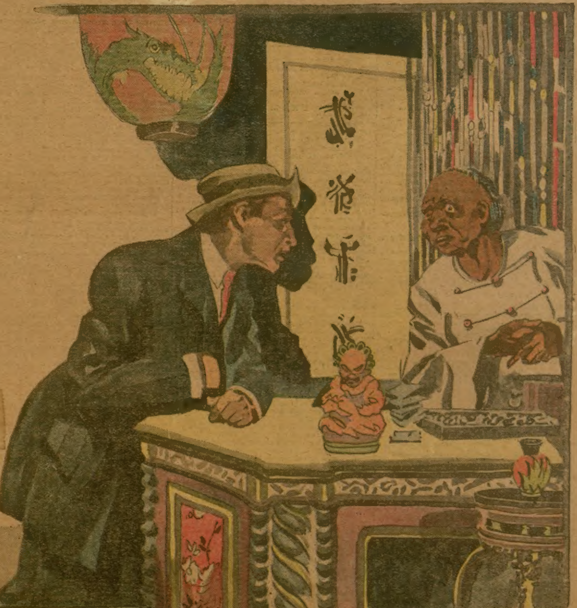
Pry smiled at the odd question and then answered:

"Well, I've lived in the Bowery at the edge of Chinatown for the past ten years, and I haven't shut my eyes or my ears to what I've seen and heard thereabouts."

"But do you speak Chinese?" Gee repeated impatiently.

"Yes, a little; but I can understand it a good deal better."

"Then I've got an important assignment for you to undertake."



"What, find the missing Alice?"

The managing editor looked up in astonishment.

"What do you know about a missing Alice?" he asked abruptly.

"Only what I read in the personal column a moment ago."

"That's mighty little compared to what I can tell you. But I was surprised because the case has not been reported to the police yet."

"Then I'm to have a little start on those fellows, eh?" asked Phil.

"I hope so but they're likely to be called in on the case now any minute."

"And what is your mystery?"

"Alice Farrand, a beautiful young woman, twenty-two years old, left her home a week ago ostensibly to visit her grandmother. She never reached the latter's home. In fact from the moment she left her mother's sight on the morning of her intended visit she has not been seen by any one who knew her so far as her friends can discover."

"An elopement?" asked Phil quietly with raised eyebrows.

"She is not known to have had any men admirers—except one and he is out of the question, being only a Chinaman, one Lee Chin."

"How came she to have a Chinese for a friend?"

"That is a strange part of the story. Her father is well off in this world's goods, she has a beautiful home and traces in her immediate ancestry one of the noted names in our national history. But her mother for ten years has been interested in what is known as Chinese mission work. This is nothing more nor less than the establishment of schools in the Chinese quarter of the city where young Chinamen—and old ones too—are taught the rudiments of the English language and religion by our white women who have devoted themselves voluntarily to the work."

"But you say that only the girl's mother was interested in this work?" broke in Phil, leaning forward in his chair as he became interested in the managing editor's narrative.

"For the past year the daughter herself has been accompanying the mother in the work and in this way has learned to know a number of the young Chinamen who frequent her mission."

"Was this Lee Chin among them?"

"Yes; he is a dapper young Chink who has adopted the American dress and sought to hide his nationality but he cannot get away from the yellow skin, the slant eyes and the black hair."

"But he has dispensed with the queue?"

"Oh, yes, he dresses like a slick young American and speaks a very fair brand of English."

"Have you any evidence that he was fond of this young woman?"

"Yes, her parents have admitted as much."

"Had the girl any fondness for the Chinaman?"

"Her parents say not but I am in doubt. That is one of the things you will have to find out."

"Has any one seen this Lee Chin since the girl disappeared?"

"The mother who has been quietly searching Chinatown during the past few days in quest of her daughter reports that she can find no trace of him. He seems to have disappeared about the same time as the girl."

"Did this Lee Chin have any money?"

"I don't know. You never can tell about these Chinese. They're mum and secretive and hang together like leeches. Then they have their secret societies or tongs as they call them whose aim it always is to keep their members out of the clutches of the law. Lee Chin could naturally get funds in that way if he needed them."

"You don't know when Chin and the girl last saw each other before her disappearance?"

"No."

"How did you get your information?"

"Through a friend who is closely connected with the Farrand family. The father and mother are intensely proud of their name and fear some disagreeable disclosures in connection with the case. For that reason they have hesitated about informing the police. But they're very anxious and intend to hire a private detective to put on the case today. The family friend whispered the case to me in hope that I might ferret out something without any publicity."

"That's about the extent of your information then?"

"About."

"Do you happen to know how the girl was dressed when she last left home?"

"Oh, yes, she wore a white silk waist, a dark blue silk skirt, tan shoes and tan silk hose and a straw colored hat trimmed with imitation cherries and deep red velvet ribbon."

"Had she any money or jewelry with her?"

"She always wore a small jeweled watch at her waist and a diamond studded locket about her neck. Both bore her initials 'A. F.' She was not known to have had more than her usual allowance of pocket money in her purse—a few dollars at most."

"Then her money and her jewelry would hardly be inducement for her murder—even by a Chinaman."

"Hardly."

"What kind of a looking girl?"

"Quite attractive. Dark eyes and hair, slender nose, full red lips and an especially attractive smile. She was below the average height and with exceptionally small hands and feet. Her teeth were perfect except for two gold-filled ones far back in her upper jaw."

Phil Pry sat in deep thought for a moment.

"This case means a jaunt into the dark and perilous haunts of Chinatown."

"You think it was a murder then?"

"I can tell you better in an hour or two."

"Well, I know you'll do your best on the case and I know of no one who can do better. Of course the Star would like to have a scoop over the other papers on any developments."

"I think we'll know enough by tomorrow morning to give you one good scoop anyway."

As Phil turned to leave the room, an office boy poked his head through the doorway and said:

"A telephone call for you, Mr. Pry. A lady. She said it was very important and that only you personally would do."

CHAPTER II.

JANET PRICE'S TIP.

Phil Pry, unable to conjecture who the "lady" on the phone might be, for his acquaintances among the gentle sex were exceedingly few, hastened to the phone booth.

"Hello," he began, taking up the receiver.

"Mr. Phil Pry?" questioned a soft voice at the other end of the wire, so low that he did not recognize it.

"The same," he replied. "You wish to speak to me?"

"You don't know who this is then?"

"I have an idea but I had rather have you tell."

"Have you forgotten so soon the girl you did such an inestimable service for only last week?"

"Miss Price?"

"The same. Are you still doing detective work?"

"To be sure, if it is in the line of my newspaper work."

"Then can I see you at once?" the soft voice inquired anxiously.

"Surely. Where?"

"In the old spot in Central Park. It is now eleven o'clock. I will be there at noon."

"I will not keep you waiting," replied Phil and gathering up his hat and cane he hurried from the office.

His first mission was to a costumer's shop in the Bowery. Here he selected a couple of cheap Chinese costumes, a queue and slouch hat. These he ordered sent to his rooms which he still kept in a quiet location downtown, despite his rise to fame in the newspaper field and the liberal additions appreciative employers had recently added to his salary. On his way uptown to keep his tryst with Miss Price, his mind promptly reverted to this young woman whose innocence he had proved in the Philpot jewelry robbery and whose expressions of gratitude had sent his heart thumping rapidly. Though only a lady's maid, she had shown a refinement and education that told him that she had a mind of more than ordinary attainments and the charm of her soft voice and the winsomeness in her face had caused him to feel differently toward her than he ever had toward any other woman of his acquaintance. Had he stopped to analyze this feeling, he might have discovered the fundamentals of a deep-seated affection but his active mind was so busy with the daily problems of his newspaper work that he allowed himself no time for mental introspection.

His watch was pointing at one o'clock when he entered the park and strode rapidly toward the spot Janet Price had appointed for their meeting. She rose from a bench and with her dark cheeks slightly flushed put out her hand as he approached. He took it gently and pressed it firmly.

"You'll pardon my boldness," she began, "in phoning to you but I felt that I might be of some little service to you and I could not overlook the opportunity of volunteering it when I remembered your great service to me."

"You owe me nothing," Phil replied quietly, leading her to a bench on which they both seated themselves, "so I am deeply grateful to you for your offer."

"I hope my information will be worth while. It concerns a young woman who has lived on the Drive just across the street from the Philpot home where I am engaged."

"Miss Farrand?"

"The same," Miss Price responded surprisedly. "What do you know about her?"

"I learned about an hour ago that she had been missing from her home since June the ninth, a week ago."

"Your information is correct. Her parents who are well off financially are nearly distracted about her strange disappearance but are afraid to ask for police help in finding her for fear some scandal may leak out."

"How did you learn this?"

"Why," said Miss Price diffidently, "I am chummy with their head maid and she told me about it last night."

"Did she give you any other information about the disappearance?"

"Little, though she hinted that the Farrands fear that a Chinaman whom the daughter has met may be involved in it some way."

"Your knowledge is about the same as mine but I am very anxious to learn more. I was assigned to the case only a few moments before you called me up."

"I am sorry that my information, then, is not more serviceable to you."

"But you can make it so if you will."

"How?"

"By being my associate in ferreting out this mystery."

"Me? Why, I can do nothing, I am sure."

"Yet you are willing to try to help?"

"Please give me the chance to display my further gratitude to you."

"You say you know the head maid in the Farrand family real well?"

"Indeed, yes; her name is Vinie Glade."

"See her then again as soon as you can and find out from her if there was any unusual happening in the Farrand home in the day or two preceding the disappearance of the daughter and the exact relations, if possible, existing between the girl and this Chinaman Lee Chin with whom she was friendly. Get me her photograph too.

A look of doubt and hesitation overspread the young woman's face.

"Is the task too difficult?" asked Phil, noting his companion's expression.

"No," she replied slowly after a pause, "not for you."

Phil grasped her hand and pressed it.

"Thank you," he murmured, "and when can you let me know?"

"Tomorrow?" asked Miss Price.

"Oh, sooner than that, please."

"Tonight then."

"That's better; let's say we'll meet here again at seven this evening."

"I'll try," was the girl's reply, and shaking hands again, they separated.

Phil rode back downtown and then wound his way into the tortuous, narrow streets of Chinatown—that strange, mystic, picturesque district of New York where within the compass of a few city squares thousands of Chinamen are hived.

Pry made his way into one of the famous chop suey restaurants of the district—Pekin. He took his seat at one of the massive inlaid tables in the central room of the place and after he had ordered a Chinese dish from the waiter carefully scrutinized his surroundings.

The apartment was richly furnished in Oriental fashion. The walls and ceiling bore fantastic Chinese paintings. Beaded draperies hung from the grillwork and a massive chandelier, glittering with gold glass prisms hung above the tables and handsomely carved benches that usurped the place of chairs. In the middle of the large room stood a gaudily decorated fountain in which spurted many streams of water, vari-colored by a swarm of miniature electric lights. Heavy rugs from the far East covered the oddly inlaid floor. There was a novelty and picturesqueness about the restaurant that was plainly a great drawing card.

"This is probably the one spot in Chinatown," thought Phil to himself as he munched at the dish set before him, "where I, as an American may learn something of almost any one of the denizens of this district. Were I a Chinaman I could go to their tongs or secret societies and find out something of Lee Chin, but I can't go there—at least not now. So I'll try here."

Accordingly when he went to the cashier's desk to pay his check, Phil leaned far over the onyx counter and whispered to the man who took his money:

"Do you know Lee Chin?"

Phil thought he noted an odd look in the Chinaman's eye but it was quickly displaced by the uncomprehending mask that the Oriental countenance usually wears.

"He Chinaman?" the cashier asked after a pause, as if striving for time in which to gather his wits.

"Sure," responded Phil almost angrily. "You don't suppose with that name he's an American, do you?"

The man behind the counter blinked and then shook his head negatively.

"Me no Lee Chin here," he answered after a pause.

"That's not what I asked," glared Phil and his hand sought his inside pocket menacingly. "Do you know him?"

The Chinaman must have comprehended Phil's move for his shifty eye wavered and he took a step backward. Then he scraped his foot upon the floor and a loud buzzer threw a shrill note thrice through the place.

Phil had no time to conjecture the purpose of the alarm for almost on the instant half a dozen Chinamen closed menacingly about him and a pretentious Oriental, in Americanized dress, strode hurriedly toward him.

CHAPTER III.

ROMANCE OF AN ORIENTAL.

Fear was an unknown sensation to Phil Pry and he did not quail at the sight of the angry-faced Orientals closing about him. He was disposed to be on his guard against violence, however, so he drew out the hand that had gone to his inside pocket and allowed the group about him to see plainly that it held the butt of a business looking revolver.

His action did not deter the approach of the sleek-looking individual whom he rightly took to be Lee Main, the proprietor of the place, a man who in inside circles was known to bear the reputation of a Lothario.

"You wantee make trouble?" he demanded of Phil, "and dlive all my customers away?"

"Oh, don't worry," replied Phil with a smile. "I'm only trying to get an honest answer to a civil question. Maybe you can give it to me. Do you know Lee Chin?"

Phil's lightning eye caught the momentary look of surprise and apprehension that the impassive face of the Chinaman could not wholly conceal.

Even before the cunning mind of the Oriental could frame a reply, the reporter's brain was busy with the suspicious display of interest in the name of Lee Chin. He was prepared, therefore, for the answer that Lee Main volunteered:

"Oh, ylea, me know him. He used to ble here, my plartner. But he glone long tlime—mebbe one—two—tlee months."

"Do you know where he is now?"

Lee Main shrugged his well-clad shoulders, raised his long, black eyebrows in a puzzled way and replied:

"[illegible] he glone way."

"Do [illegible]ow where?"

"Meb[illegible]t of town."

Phil wa[illegible] unaware of the eager way in which the group of pigtailed waiters were pressing about him. There seemed a strange fascination to them in the questions he propounded and the replies which their employer gave. The American could not quite understand it and yet he felt there was some hidden connection in it to the mystery which he had set out to solve.

Intuitively the reporter then launched this question:

"Do you happen to know an American girl named Alice Farrand?"

Lee Main's sallow cheeks went white for an instant and his hand closed on the edge of the onyx-topped desk as if for support. But he promptly recovered himself and replied with as much nonchalance as a Chinaman can assume:

"Alice Farrand? Alice Farrand? Pletty little Amelican girl? Oh, ylea, mebbe she clome here sometime. Mebbe she clome here and eat chop suey with Lee Chin."

"You're sure of that, eh?" queried Phil sharply.

"Oh, yles, mebbe," was the odd response.

"You know this Alice Farrand, do you?"

"Oh, yles; she Amelican, pretty girl."

"Do you know where she is now?"

Again Phil noted the fleeting glance of apprehension that fled across the yellow face of the Chinese restaurant keeper. Nor did the puzzled look of surprise and inquiry that momentarily marked the strange group about him escape his notice.

"It seems to me as if I was already digging at the crust of this mystery," Phil thought to himself, "and in such strange surroundings."

Then he waited for Lee Main's reply to his query. It was not informative but it was what Phil had expected:

"Me? Oh, no, me Chinaman, she Amelican girl. How me know?" and the Oriental's wax-like cheeks broke into a grin.

"But you know where she lives?" persisted Phil.

"Oh, yles; uptown, on Liverside Dlive."

"How did you know that?" came Phil's question with a quickness and directness that shook the Chinaman. His mouth opened in a little gasp of amazement. Then he gathered himself quickly and answered:

"Oh, Lee Chin, he tlell me. And once I go to plarty there."

"Lee Chin is a good friend of yours then?"

"Oh, yles."

"Never had any quarrel with him, eh?"

"Oh, no," and the Chinaman shook his head vigorously.

"But he was your partner here?"

"Oh, yles."

"Then why isn't he your partner now?"

Phil's question caught Lee Main off his guard and his face went blank for a flash—long enough for the reporter to note—but he quickly answered:

"Oh, Lee Chin he bling too many Amelican girls here."

"He liked American girls, did he?"

"Oh, yles; he dless in Amelican clothes and cut his hair like Amelican and wear his fleet like Amelican and he like Amelican girls. He go to Chinese mission with them and they learn him read Amelican. An' Amelican girls like Lee too," Lee Main ended with a grin.

"And you're sure you don't know where he is now?"

The restaurant keeper shook his head vigorously in the negative and at the same time the motley crew that had gathered menacingly about Phil slowly slunk away.

"Well, where did he live?"

Lee Main blinked and then stammered:

"On Eighth Avenue."

"What number?"

"Eight hundred, top floor."

"Have you ever been there?"

"Me? Oh, yles, plenty times."

"When did you see Lee Chin last?"

Suddenly the Chinaman's face grew hard and his eyes took a steely glitter.

"What business is that of ylours?" he blurted out angrily. "What business you clome here and ask me?"

For answer Phil threw back the lapel of his coat where he carried the ornate badge that all active newspaper men wear to give them access behind fire and police lines.

"See that," he said, pressing his finger against the token, "that's the sign of the law, so don't fool with me."

Now if there is any one thing more than another that a Chinaman dreads it is the threat of the law. He is cunning and cruel. In the caverns of his densely populated Chinatown, he will commit many strange, malicious and vengeful crimes and devote his hours to many lawless and degrading practices but once let him learn that the eye of the police is upon him and he flees to midnight haunts and lives in trembling until friends in the tong or secret society to which he may belong, smuggle him to distant cities or sneak him aboard ship bound for his native land.

Lee Main, bright Oriental as he was, was not free from the law terror of his race. He quailed quickly at sight of Phil's formidable evidence of authority.

"Oh, Lee Chin he here week—tlo weeks back."

"Don't you remember the day?"

Lee Main nodded his head vigorously in the negative.

"And when was this American girl here last?"

"Slame time—with Lee Chin."

"Was that the last time you saw her?"

It was only a chance question but Phil was surprised by the manner in which the Chinaman's jaw dropped and his mouth opened when he heard it. Lee Main struggled for speech for an instant but words clogged in his throat. Then he nodded a yes.

"You're sure?" persisted Phil.

"Slure," came the quavering monosyllabic reply.

"Now I'm sure this Chink knows something about this girl's disappearance—" thought the reporter as he noted the other's uneasiness, "but I'll have to dig it out of him in some other place than here."

CHAPTER IV.

ON A HOT SCENT.

The following two hours Phil Pry spent in the seclusion of his own room. Here he set out to attire himself in the Chinese garb he had purchased earlier in the day. He drew on the flapping trousers whose bottoms reached barely to his ankles and got into the loose black silk blouse. Over a pair of yellow hose he drew the tight, confining sandal. Then he uncurled the long queue, fitted the wig over his own close cropped hair and then curled and fastened the long braid on his head.

Next he set to work on his face with grease paint and fine brush. He reduced his skin to the sallow Asiatic tinge. He penciled his eyebrows to a long black slant. He modified the red lips to a pink pallor.

When he had completed the task he called up the Star office with the telephone he had installed in his room and directed the city editor to send up to him a sharp-eyed office boy whom he had known for a long time. Then he settled himself in the shade of a corner and gave his mind up to deep deliberation.

In less than half an hour a timid tap sounded on his door.

"Clome in," Phil ordered in a high-pitched voice.

The boy from the Star office turned the

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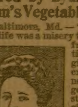

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knob and entered boldly but when his eyes fell on the disguised figure he halted and fell back in fright.

"Clome here," ejaculated Phil. "Why you scared?"

The lad grasped the back of a chair and finally managed to ask:

"Where's Phil Pry?"

"Phil Ply? Who Phil Ply?"

"He lives here. What are you doing in his room?"

"I live here. No Phil Pry here. Me Phil Ply."

Added fright overspread the boy's face. He backed toward a door as if to flee.

Satisfied with his experiment, Phil let out a shriek of laughter in his natural voice.

"It's I, Tommy; it's really Phil Pry. You didn't know me, eh?"

"Well," the lad blurted, a grin overspreading his cheeks as he came back, "you're a pippin. I didn't think any Yankee could look so like a Chink."

"You think I'd pass in a crowd, eh?"

"Why, your own dad wouldn't know you."

All right, you can go back to the office now. But be sure to keep mum about what you've seen here."

"Why, what's up?" inquired the eager faced boy.

"Oh, you'll know soon enough. I couldn't tell you now. Run along."

When six o'clock rang out from a neighboring steeple, Phill, still garbed as a Chinaman, thrust his revolver into his blouse and made his way to keep his engagement with Janet Price. He aimed to reach the rendezvous in the Park some time in advance of the hour he had set for it. He wanted to be first on the scene so that when Miss Price made her way to the appointed spot almost on the minute, she was surprised to see sitting on the park bench what she took for a sleek but unmistakable Chinaman. Seeing him, she turned to leave.

"Don't go, Miss Price," hurriedly spoke up Phil. "It's only your friend Pry in disguise."

"I wouldn't have suspected it," she replied, coming back hesitantly. "Your voice alone shows it is you. You look to be a perfect Chinaman."

"What luck did you have?" inquired Phil, anxious to learn what had been the result of his friend's investigation.

"Well, I hope I've discovered most of the things you wanted to know. I've got this for you, anyway," she said with a happy smile, as she drew out a photograph of the missing girl, Alice Farrand.

Phil examined the picture soberly and carefully. He noted the dreamy eyes, the slender nostrils, the full lips, the rounded chin and the abundant dark hair.

"A tender, sentimental, affectionate girl," he thought to himself—then aloud he said, "May I keep it?"

"I borrowed it for a few days. You can have it till I must return it."

"Learn anything else?"

"On the night before Miss Farrand disappeared, there had been a little party at her home, given by her mother for some of her Chinese proteges. Among them were several whom she had taught in years gone by. These latter included one Americanized young fellow named Lee Chin and another named Lee Main."

"This Lee Main conducts the Pekin restaurant?"

"The same, I believe.

A strange light shone in the reporter's eyes. Then he asked abruptly:

"Did your informant know anything about either of these men?"

"She says she thinks they were both in love with the girl. They had called many times in the absence of the father and always to see Alice."

"And about this party?"

"A strange thing happened. Lee Chin made during the evening what Mr. and Mrs. Farrand took for a proposal of marriage to their daughter. The father was so angry that, thinking the Chinaman was under the influence of liquor, he ejected him from the house. This other man, Lee Main, helped the father and as Chin was being driven down the steps my friend, Miss Glade, the housekeeper, who had been on the spot during the confusion, says she thought she saw him shake his fist at Lee Main and blurt out something in Chinese that sounded a great deal like a threat."

"So," exclaimed Phil, almost under his breath, "I begin to see a light." Then to Miss Price: "And Miss Farrand left home for the last time on the following morning?"

"Yes, with the statement that she was going to visit her grandmother, of whom she was very fond, for the day."

"Do you know whether or not she received any message by mail, messenger or telephone before she left home that morning?"

"Yes, a note to her was delivered by messenger before she left home but no one knows its contents."

"Was it delivered before or after she had stated her intention of going to visit her grandmother?"

"I don't know."

"Who was the messenger?"

"A young Chinaman."

'Ah; and what do the parents think?"

"That Lee Chin has some part in her disappearance."

"Did she go to her grandmother's the morning she left home?"

"Nothing was seen of her by any one of whom the family knows after she left the house."

"And they've had no word, no message from her?"

"Not a word."

"And now, if you're agreeable, I've got another little assignment for you."

Janet Price blushed in the growing dusk and her dark, lustrous eyes sparkled as she looked up at the strangely-garbed man beside her.

"I'll try it if you want me to," she murmured.

"Thank you," said Phil. "You're really getting indispensable to me," this with an odd smile.

"Am I?" she blushed anew.

"I wish I could tell you," Phil answered soberly and his hand fell gently upon the slender fingers of the woman beside him. She started but did not withdraw her hand.

"Have you ever visited Chinatown?" he asked.

"Yes, once or twice with a sight-seeing party."

"Do you want to take another trip down there for me?"

"Will I have to go alone?"

"You can better do the task I want done alone."

"Well," she said with a tremor in her voice, "I'll try."

The continuation of this extremely interesting story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It leads to very strange and fascinating situations. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

THE PUMPKIN-HEADS.

It was so very foolish. They had been engaged for six months—Kitty Eastment and Howard Walton—and her uncle John had promised that when the marriage came off he would present her with a cottage and an acre of ground.

On this night the lovers were talking away in the jolliest manner when Miss Kitty happened to wonder how many pumpkin trees there were in the garden. The young man at once proceeded to air his superior knowledge by trotting out the pumpkin vine.

"But if pumpkins don't grow on trees then carrots do," protested and asserted the young lady in the same breath.

As a matter of fact both of them were more ignorant of matters pertaining to the vegetable kingdom than the farmer is of the city picture galleries, but this was the first time they had ever differed and neither wanted to give up.

The result was that Mr. Walton donned his hat and took a walk, and Miss Eastment stamped her foot and shed tears.

No engaged young man, who knows that he knows all about it, whether pumpkins or carrots, can turn back after bouncing himself out of the house, nor can an engaged young girl, who thinks she knows, pursue and catch him by the coat tails.

And when the next evening came what excuse had Howard Walton for calling? He must look upon the engagement as dissolved until he received a little note containing something that might be twisted into an apology.

And was Miss Kitty Eastment going to write such a note? Not at all. If Mr. H. W. could walk off that way, he must find some other way to walk back.

One bad feature about the affair was that she was going with her mother to the Catskills the next week, while he didn't expect a vacation at all during the summer. If Howard didn't call and help make up before she went away, what then? Could it be done by letter? Could it ever be done at all?

And Howard contented himself with walking past the house about twenty times every evening, and no little note came, and by and by the house was shut for the season. It was a doleful business.

It was a business to sigh over. Therefore, there was sighing and lamenting, and the very thought of carrots and pumpkins became abhorrent.

It was to find a place in which she could sigh unobserved by the other guests—where her eyes could moisten without her mother recommending somebody's eye-water—that Miss Kitty started out from the Mountain House one morning after breakfast for a solitary walk.

No; it was a solitary climb. There is no walking up there. One simply climbs from shelf to shelf until they get somewhere, and it is twice as hard work getting back to where you started from.

Kitty climbed and clambered and finally got somewhere. It was on a slab of rock just wide enough for two to sit on. There was but one of her, and she had room to spare. This was another grievance to add to the list.

She thought and thought, and the more she thought the more complicated the situation. Not the situation of the Catskill mountains, nor the shelf to which she had climbed, but the carrot and pumpkin situation. She wished that Uncle Simpson had never offered the little home; she wished she had never heard of certain vegetables; she wished that Howard Walton was not so opinionated and obstinate.

How could she write unless he wrote first? He could write and say that it was not hot in the city, but the banking business was good, and she would understand. She had brought pencil and paper, but of what use?

Miss Kitty had been sitting on the shelf for two long hours, and if she had been less preoccupied she might have been alarmed three or four different times over. As a matter of fact, the stone was not secure. It had been crawling along like a worm from the first moment of feeling her weight.

At a certain point it must tip and send her into the tree-tops below. That point would have been reached in half a minute more, when a man sprang on to the shelf and picked the girl up and sprang to one side and ten feet down with her. Both lay stunned for a moment, and then she opened her eyes to cry out:

"Sir, how dare you! O, it's Harlod! What—what has happened?"

"I got here just in time to see the shelf sliding off with you. We are both bruised, but have you any broken bones?"

Miss Kitty had a dignity to maintain. She realized that in ten seconds, and she replied:

"Mr. Walton, I have no broken bones, thank you. How does it happen that you are here in the mountains?"

"On banking business," he glibly replied.

"O, I see. There are so many banks up here!"

"I found you had walked in this direction, and so I followed."

"Yes? Well, I have no banking business to do."

"And the bank said I could stay for two weeks."

"But you'll tire of it in three days. There isn't a single attraction here."

"Um. Kitty, I came up to tell you—"

"Miss Eastment, please. You came up to tell me that pumpkins grow in strawberry beds, perhaps?"

"Kitty, I was foolish, but, you see—you know—I have been brought up in a bank, and—"

At that moment they heard footsteps approaching, and a minute later a mountain farmer came into view and halted to ask:

"Have you folks seen anything of a calf around here? He got out of the pen last night, and the foolheaded critter don't know 'nuff to come back."

He was assured that nothing had been seen of a calf, and then the lovers looked at each other and to the farmer and back. Both had the same thought. Here was a farmer—a man that knew all about carrots and pumpkins. Should they appeal to him? Yes.

"Mister, do carrots grow on vines?" asked Miss Kitty in her innocent way.

"Lor', but how I pity you city folks!" replied the man as he tilted back his old hat.

"And do pumpkins grow on trees?" asked Howard.

"Yes, they grow right beside idiots! How do you folks manage down there to keep out of the lunatic asylum?"

When he had departed the lovers started down the mountain. Hardly a word was said until they reached the veranda of the hotel. Then they looked at each other, discovered that both were smiling, and said in chorus:

"I'm glad the farmer was looking for his lost calf!"

And thereafter—? But we all know that those things are always made up and happiness returns.

THE DIAMOND RING.

Peter Holt had been born of farmer folks. He had worked on a farm all his life, and at the age of forty was still a farmer's hired man.

Peter was not stupid, but he was slow. He had little education, but he got around to things if given time. Being slow and good tempered and without argument, Peter was taken by some folks as weak in the top story.

One day Peter had to make a journey by rail. It was his first ride on the cars, but he made no mistakes. He gave the conductor his ticket, hung on to his seat with both hands, and whenever the train stopped at a station he stopped with it. It tickled him to find that he could catch on so easily.

By and by he had a seat mate. It was a sorrowful young man, who kept one eye on the conductor and wept with the other. His mother, who lived in Chicago, was dying, and he had no money to go to her and receive her dying blessing.

As the young man continued to weep he aroused Peter's sympathies, and he finally got around to say so. Then the young man explained that there was a way, and one way only, open for him to reach Chicago before the spirit of his dear mother took its flight.

He had a diamond ring with him—one that had been presented to him by Mr. Rockefeller for not climbing Mt. McKinley and tearing his clothes. It was a souvenir that he hated to part with, but when a young man's mother is dying, what would you have?

He showed the jewel, but showed it very carefully. It was wrapped in seven folds of tissue paper. The diamond itself was not quite as large as a walnut, but those things cannot always be regulated to within a carat or two. The value was $300. Under the circumstances he would part with it for $25.

The sacrifice of $275 showed how he loved his mother—how anxious he was to press her wrinkled hand for the last time.

Peter Holt had $25, and a little more. He had heard of diamonds, and knew that they were not bought and sold at the price of turnips. He had also heard of 10-cent stores, but this ring could not have come from one of them.

As a matter of fact, after taking half an hour to think it over, he decided that he could oblige an anxious young man and a dying mother and drive a big bargain for himself by investing in that ring. The money went out of his pocket, and the ring went in, and for an hour he trembled for fear the young man would back out.

As a farmer's hired man Peter was slammed around any old way, and most anything was considered good enough for him. When he returned with that ring he learned more of human nature in ten minutes than in all his life before.

A special supper was placed before him; he was told that he needn't milk the cows that night; a third cup of tea was offered him; he was asked to change from his straw bed into the spare room.

During the evening he told his story over at least a dozen times, and the ring was inspected and reinspected until, half an hour before going to bed, he was called Mr. Holt instead of Pete.

He was not routed out at 4 o'clock next morning to feed the stock. They let him lie in bed until 7, and then it was honey and pancakes for breakfast. Peter felt a warm glow stealing over him. He was receiving the deference paid to the rich, and he sniffed the incense and decided that it was fine.

Very soon after breakfast the farmer's wife began smiling at Peter. She also used words of flattery. She also hinted that as he had no use for a diamond ring he present it to her. It would be something to remember him as long as she lived. Peter said he'd think it over.

The farmer had a daughter named Betsey. That was the reason she called herself Adele. Peter had tried to fall in love with her, but she informed him that the gulf between them was as wide as the Atlantic ocean.

Now, she showed a disposition to narrow the gulf to the width of the Erie canal. She presented Peter with one of her old hair brushes, she praised his eyes, she said he was no fool, she said that the girl who got him for a husband would be lucky. It was like wine for Peter.

Then she asked him to present her with the ring as a token of her esteem for him. Peter shied. He was a little slow, but he remembered various occasions when she had neglected to make his bed, and when she had said that a man who ate with his knife ought to be in a pen with the hogs.

Next day the farmer took Peter out to the barn and told him he was such a driver of work that his wages must be raised. He also said that Peter was sharper than a razor and that there wasn't a lightning rod man in the State who could hold a candle to him. He had had forty hired men in his time, but never one like Peter Holt.

Then he wound up by offering Peter a $3 calf for the $300 ring. Peter asked for six months' time in which to make up his mind.

There was a widow Glenn on the next farm whom he had thought to court. When he began to tell of his love he was hustled out doors. As he was going the widow flung after him:

"Why, Peter Holt, you don't know enough to come in when it rains. Do you think I'm going to the idiot asylum for a husband!"

A week after the diamond ring was brought home the widow called to Peter over the fence to come down that evening and pop her some corn and see what was the matter with one of her hens. Peter went.

His hair, ears and nose were praised; it was predicted that he would run for office some day; it was remarked that his wife, when he came to get one, would be a proud woman.

Other remarks were remarked, and poor Peter was about to declare his love again when she asked for the ring as a souvenir to enable the widow to remember that she was 40 years old that day. She would take it as one of the nicest, sweetest things ever done for her. Pete didn't leave the ring. He wanted time to think about it.

Then the owner of the next farm down the road wanted to hire Peter away from his employer. He had a wife and three daughters, and all wanted that ring. None of them got it.

Then it was suggested that he present it to a church and let it be raffled for the benefit of the heathen. Peter didn't fall for it.

He was still hanging on and enjoying the situation when a wire fence man came along and pronounced the diamond nothing but a piece of glass. It was taken to town and the jeweler said the same thing.

"Villain! Deceiver! Swindler! Get out of this!" shouted the farmer who employed Peter.

"O, you rascal, but it's poison for you!" cried the widow Glenn.

"Such an artful rascal should be lynched on the spot," was the opinion of the man who had tried to lure him away.

"And he would have given the church a rhinestone ring!" gasped a dozen others.

And poor Peter Holt fled in the night and took his ring with him. Riches and power were not for him.

An Admiral's Yarn.

Admiral Lord Charles Beresford, at a dinner, defended the customs officials of the port.

"These intelligent young men," he said, "in a difficult position conduct themselves adroitly. The stories are false that make them out to be brutal and indelicate. If it were Turkey now!

"In the days before Batoum fell to Russia," he resumed, "a sailor on an English ship lying in Batoum harbor went ashore and bought himself a pair of trousers. He put the trousers on. His old ones were quite worn out and he told the dealer to throw them away. Then he started forth into the street proudly.

"Soon he met a group of customs officials. They stopped him and their chief said:

"Those are new trousers you've got on?"

"'Yes,' said the sailor. 'I just bought them.'

"'Then,' said the customs chief, 'you must pay duty on them.'

"'But I've got no money left,' said the sailor. And this was true. His last copper had gone to pay the shopman's bill.

"'No money,' cried the chief. 'That's very bad for you then. You'll have to leave the trousers with us in that case.'

"'But I've got nothing under them," objected the sailor.

"'Never mind. We won't look,' and the chief and his men all repeated that there was no fear—they would none of them look.

"'But other people may look,' shouted the desperate sailor.

"The officials shrugged their shoulders.

"'That,' they said, 'is no concern of ours.'

"And so the poor sailor was forced, willy nilly, to leave his new purchase behind and to gallop to his ship as best he could, making up in speed for what he lacked in drapery."

A Regular Cat.

"I haven't seen you for five years," chirped the first lady, "but you don't look a day older, my dear."

"You are too kind," simpered the other dame.

"I mean it. You don't look a bit older and neither does your hat."

Hungry
Little
Folks

find delightful satisfaction in a bowl of toothsome

Post
Toasties

with Cream and Sugar.

When the children want lunch, this wholesome, nourishing food is always ready to serve right from the package without cooking, and saves many steps for mother.

Let the youngsters have Post Toasties—superb summer food.

"The Memory Lingers"

Postum Cereal Co., Limited,
Battle Creek, Mich.

Pickled Peppers

HE'S OPEN-MINDED.

Sam Spotts he sez, "Now, as fer me,
 I'm open-minded. There ain't no
Arg'mint in which a man can't see
 Some bit o' truth, and that's jest so!
Here's what you fellers ought to do:
 Try all the time to figger out
The other feller's point of view,
 So's you'll know what he's talkin' 'bout!

"I listen while you fellers chin,
 And 'tain't no matter what you say,
I do my best to take it in
 And think it over, anyway;
You spring a theory new or queer,
 But be it large or be it small,
I think it over till it's clear—
 My mind is open to you all!"

But Sim Smart sez though Sam extracts
 Some truth from all the fellers bring,
He halfway knows so many facts
 He ain't real sure of anything!
He sez to Spotts one day, "I am
 Intendin' now to state your fix:
You're so blamed open-minded, Sam,
 It sifts all through and nothin' sticks!"

By Special Messenger.

It is told that after Prof. Aytoun had made proposals of marriage to Miss Emily Jane Wilson, daughter of "Christopher North," he was, as a matter of course, referred to her father. As the professor was uncommonly diffident, he said to her, "Emily, my dear, you must speak to him for me. I could not summon courage to speak to the professor on this subject."

"Papa is in the library," said the lady.

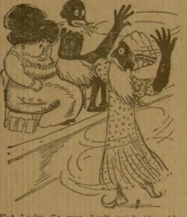
"Then you had better go to him," said the professor, "and I will wait here."

There being no apparent help for it, the lady proceeded to the library. "Papa's answer is pinned to the back of my dress," said Miss Wilson, as she reentered the room.

Turning around the delighted suitor read these words:

"With the author's compliments."

Cool Job.



Fat Lady—So you don't work the sideshows during the summer months?

Whirling Dervish—No, I hire myself out to the people that can't procure an electric fan.

One Who Overtalked.

Private John Allen of Mississippi tells of a speech on wool made by Senator Thomas H. Carter of Montana, some time ago, and sent out extensively by the Senator. After a time the Senator concluded not to send out any more copies of that speech.

"Reminds me," said private John, "of the case of a negro I knew down in Mississippi who was to be tried for murder and who had promised the prosecuting attorney to plead guilty.

"The time came for the trial. The prosecuting attorney had no witnesses. He thought none was necessary. While the other business of the court was being cleared up a local lawyer sat down by the negro and asked, 'Do you want to get out of this?'

"'Yassir; reckon I does.'

"'Have you got five dollars?'

"'No, sah, but I kin git it.'

"So the negro raised the five and gave it to the lawyer, who told him to say nothing, but when the judge asked him to plead, to plead not guilty instead of guilty.

"The negro was arraigned. He pleaded not guilty.

"'Look here, you black scoundrel!" yelled the prosecuting attorney; 'what do you mean by that plea? Didn't you promise me a dozen times you would plead guilty?'

"'Yassir, I done promised dat,' replied the negro, 'but I reckon I done overtalked myself.'"

Rather Ambiguous.

The new reporter of the Centerville Times meant well, but he was not always careful in the wording of his sentences. When the father of Mrs. James Bowles appeared at his desk two days after the wedding the reporter knew from the irate mien of his visitor that something had gone wrong.

"You are responsible, in the absence of your chief, for this report of my daughter's wedding," and Mr. Cobb tapped a paragraph published the night before.

"Yes, sir, and I thought it was a mighty good sendoff I gave them," said the reporter.

"You did, did you?" thundered Mr. Cobb. "Well, perhaps you will be kind enough to explain these words."

He pointed, and following the compelling finger the reporter read:

"The gift of the bridegroom to the bride was a brooch of rubies and diamonds, and there were many other beautiful things in cut glass on that table."

A Powerful Hair Restorer.

A certain young man, fresh and good-looking, has a head as bare as a billiard ball. Recently he detected on the pate of an acquaintance similiarly afflicted, a light down.

"Hello, old man!" he cried; "how did you do it? Sure I see signs of a second crop."

Suspicious as all bald-headed men are, of chaff, the friend replied, curtly:

"Gin and onions. Slice two onions, steep 'em in gin, and apply three times a day."

"When a few hours later the party of the first part strolled into the club for lunch, the waiter who leaned over him to take his order started back and held his breath.

"Whew! Joe, what a breath you have!" said his neighbor. "Confound it, man, do you munch raw onions in the middle of the day?"

"It isn't my breath; it's my hair," he replied, indignantly. "It is a wash, a restorative I use."

Now, to this very day the victim of this cold-blooded hoax innocently baptizes his suffering scalp morning, noon, and night with the gin and onions, and watches anxiously for the coming of the down.

Rural Sympathy.

The rural free delivery reaches its flower of perfection in Vermont.

"Mr. Carter," said a lady who was summering among the mountains, "I have a letter, received some days ago, saying a package has been forwarded to me by mail. I have not received it yet. Have you seen anything of it?"

"A package?" asked the rural free deliverer.

"Yes, sir."

"What kind of a package?"

"Why, a small package—a box, in fact—covered with paper, containing some of my property."

"A small box—pasteboard probably?"

"Yes."

"Let me see," pondered the rural free deliverer. "A package? Oh, yes, I guess that was your package I delivered to Mrs. Brown down in the foothills a few days ago. She hadn't any mail for a long time and I kind of felt sorry for her."

Way of Killing Them.

He had besought the pharmaceutical chemist to give him something with which he might kill moths, and the pharmaceutical chemist had supplied him with camphor balls, but the next day he was back again, holding some of the fragments of the balls within his hand.

"Are you the same young man phwat sold thim things to me yisterday?" he roared.

"I am," replied the pharmaceutical chemist composedly. "What's wrong with them?"

"Phwat's wrong with thim?" repeated the irate purchaser. "The idea av sellin' thim things to kill moths, or anything else! See, here! If yez can show me the man that can hit a moth wid a single one av thim I'll say nuthin' about the orniments an' lukin-glass me an' the missus broke!"

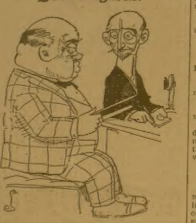
ELOPING UP TO DATE.

The coatless man puts a careless arm
 'Round the waist of the hatless girl,
While over the dustless, mudless roads
 In a horseless wagon they whirl.
Like a leadless bullet from a hammerless gun,
 By smokeless powder driven,
They fly to taste the speechless joys
 By endless union given.
The only luncheon his coinless purse
 Affords to them the means
Is a tasteless meal of boneless cod,
 With a dish of stringless beans.
He smokes his old tobaccoless pipe
 And laughs a mirthless laugh
When papa tries to coax her back
 By wireless telegraph.

FREE ASTHMA AND HAY FEVER CURE.

D. J. Lane, a chemist at 118 Lane Bldg., St. Mary's, Kansas, manufactures a remedy for Asthma and Hay Fever in which he has so much confidence that he sends a $1 bottle by express to anyone who will write him for it. His offer is that he is to be paid for it if it cures and the one taking the treatment is to be the judge.

Quick Diagnosis.



Mr. Fatwun—Don't you think I'm suffering from overwork, doctor?

Doc—Yes; possibly. I've noticed you toiling hard at the dinner table. What you need is a vacation on a desert island. No charge for the advice.

The Point of View.

William had just returned from college, resplendent in peg-top trousers, silk hosiery, a fancy vest, and a necktie that spoke for itself. He entered the library where his father was reading. The old gentleman looked up and surveyed his son. The longer he looked the more disgusted he became.

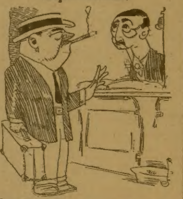
"Son," he finally blurted out, "you look like a——fool!"

Later, the old major, who lived next door, came in and greeted the boy heartily.

"William," he said, with undisguised admiration, "you look exactly like your father did twenty years ago when he came back from school."

"Yes," replied William, with a smile, "so father was just telling me."

Improvement.



Hotel Clerk—Well, how did you sleep last night?

Drummer—On the floor; I found it just as soft as the bed and it didn't sag.

Marine Astronomers.

Capt. H. J. Hollinshed of the Arethusa talked at a luncheon in New York about the comet.

"We had a good view of the comet off Tarifa in the Mediterranean," he said. "The sailors didn't like it. They sent a committee to me to get my opinion on it.

"'Captain,' said the spokesman, 'we want to ask your opinion.'

"'Yes, my lad,' said I; 'what about?'

"'About that thing up there," he said, pointing at the comet aflame in the western sky.

"'Very well,' said I. 'But first tell me what you think it is yourself.'

"'Well, sir," said the spokesman, 'we've talked it over very carefully and we've about come to the conclusion that it's a star sprung aleak.'"

A Friend's Opinion.

Hammerer—I'll have to get a new piano. Our old one is all worn out. The action is too uneven.

Hardhead—The action! What's that?

Hammerer—I mean some of the keys go down too hard and some too easy. I become accustomed to it, and then when I play on a new piano in some one else's house I hit some keys too hard and others not hard enough. Understand?

Hardhead—I see.

Hammerer—Well, the unexpected sounds startle me so that I forget the notes and get thrown out.

Hardhead—Well, I think that's pretty rough. They might tell you to stop, or hit you with a chair leg, or something, but I don't think they ought to throw you out.

Easy Marks.

"So you don't believe in 'home-coming' weeks?" volunteered the summer boarder who had called down for his mail.

"By heck, no," responded the old postmaster with much emphasis. "Last year we advertised a home-coming week and more people poured into this little hamlet than the main street could accommodate. We worked our hardest to entertain our ex-citizens and when the whole thing was over we found that we had wined and dined sixteen hoboes, ten stranded actors, a broken-down gambler and a fugitive horse thief. They just cleaned out the town, so it ain't very likely that we will advertise a home-coming week again for some time."

A Stupid Maid.

Miss Clara—Horrors! What in the world are you doing?

Maid—Pilin' up these books, ma'am.

Miss Clara—Oh, you stupid, stupid thing! You are not fit to be in a respectable family. Those are my novels.

Maid—Yes'm.

Miss Clara—Oh, how could you? You're enough to drive any one wild. Don't you know that some of them I've read and some of them I haven't?

Maid—Yes, ma'am.

Miss Clara—And here you've mixed them all up, so I can never separate them.

Why They Lingered.

Parker—Were you on the jury in the Parkman case?

Harker—Yes.

Parker—Why did it take you so long to reach a verdict?

Harker—It didn't take long.

Parker—It didn't? The jury was out a week.

Harker—Yes, but not for reaching a verdict. We found Parkman guilty in a few minutes. What kept us out was the fact that none of us had any work, and we wanted to earn a little extra money.

Nailed!

The officers of the thumb print bureau were just wishing for something interesting to turn up when a telephone message offered timely diversion. A woman was speaking.

"Do you make prints of anybody's thumbs except criminals?" she asked.

The bureau did.

"Well," said the woman, "if I will come down there right away with a man will you make a print of his thumbs?"

The bureau would. The man and the woman came.

"We want his thumb prints for identification," said the woman. "We are going to be married tomorrow. He is my third husband. The other two ran away and I had the hardest time to find them because there was no sure way of identifying them. They say thumb prints can never change and that a man can be tracked by them to the ends of the earth. I hope I shall never have to use them, but it is just as well to be on the safe side. Will you make them?"

The bureau did.

How the Town Was Honored.

The native pride of small American towns is one of the most delightful things about them.

"Did the Presidential train stop at Plunkville?" asked a visitor of the mayor of that place.

"No, it did not," replied the official, "but one of the party threw out a burnt match as they passed through."

Real Solicitude.

Husband—You are quite comfortable, dear?

Wife—Yes, love.

"The cushions are easy and soft?"

"Yes, darling."

"You don't feel any jolts?"

"No, sweetest."

"And there is no draft on my lamb, is there?"

"No, my ownest own."

"Then change seats with me."

What He Wanted.

A young Baltimore man has a habit of correcting such carelessness as comes to his notice.

The other day he walked into a shop and asked for a comb.

"Do you want a narrow man's comb?" asked the clerk.

"No," said the customer, gravely. "I want a comb for a stout man with rubber teeth."

Tommy Knew.

Teacher (addressing class)—A philanthropist is a person who exerts himself to do good to his fellow men. Now, if I were wealthy, children (she added by way of illustration) and gave money freely to all needy and unfortunates who asked my aid, I'd be a——

She broke off abruptly to point at a boy in the class.

"What would I be, Tommy?" she asked.

"A cinch!" shouted Tommy.

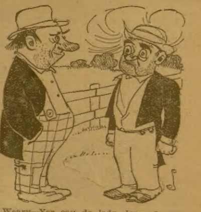
The Hint Courteous.

Hegan—I think Miss de Blank is very rude.

Jones—What causes you to think that? I never thought her so.

Hegan—I met her out for a walk this afternoon, and asked if I could see her home. She said yes, I could see it from the top of the high-school building, and that it wasn't necessary to go any farther.

Very Homelike.



Weary—Yer say de lady down de pike treated yer like one of her own children; what did she do?

Dusty—She told me ter wash me face an' comb me hair.

BOOM IN PIANOS.

Rothschild & Company, of Chicago, Buy the Burdett Piano Factory at Monroeville, Ohio, for the Manufacturing of Meister Pianos.

(*Special to The Chicago Ledger.*)

MONROEVILLE, O., Aug. 3.

Monroeville is on the point of a public celebration in view of a manufacturing boom which has its impetus in the recent purchase of the Burdett Piano Company's property by Rothschild & Company, the great Chicago house which manufactures the celebrated Meister Piano and retails it in all parts of the world on the weekly or monthly payment plan. The remodeling of the plant, which is well under way, has given immediate employment to over 200 men and this number will be largely increased as soon as the production of pianos begins, the latter part of August at the latest. This will bring a lot of new people to Monroeville so that the entire town will be benefitted by the new enterprise. Rothschild & Company is one of Chicago's greatest commercial institutions and has become famous for reducing the cost of necessities and luxuries to the public. Last year it sold to the people of this country 8,000 Meister pianos and the management figures that the number they will produce this year will be even more. They make a magnificent instrument at $175, send it to any home in America on thirty days' free trial and then if it is found to be satisfactory they permit the buyer to pay for it at the rate of $1 a week or $5 a month. Inasmuch as nine-tenths of the buying in America is done on the instalment plan, Rothschild & Company have enjoyed the most remarkable success. They have always believed that the prices of pianos of class have always been too high and so have demonstrated to the people of this country that fine pianos can be made at reasonable cost. They sell direct to the public from their factories and cut out the profits of jobber, retailer and salesmen. Monroeville has welcomed the new concern with open arms and will do everything in its power to co-operate.

For Love of Odette;

Or, RESISTLESS FATE'S DECREE

By Stanley F. Matthews

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CHAPTER VIII.

CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

ODETTE sat in a low chair.

Her face was deathly pale, and her eyes closed—indeed, at first sight Miles felt a ghastly chill pass over him, so death-like was her appearance; but then he could see her lips moving, as though she were speaking in low tones.

Directly in front of her sat the madam, holding her hands up before the face of the girl, and moving them with a peculiar waving, rhythmic action that suggested hypnotism.

Her mission to Sunnyside Farm was being carried out; she had been sent there by the arch schemer to win the confidence of the young girl, and when the opportunity developed play her cunning role.

Once Odette yielded to the strange influence the woman was able to command, she could be made to tell anything she knew; and it would be a simple matter to thus learn just where the diamonds were concealed.

When she came to her right senses again Odette would not be aware that anything unusual had occurred beyond the fact that she had been taken with an overpowering desire to sleep, and possibly had a headache as a consequence.

And how easy for the clever schemer to send or carry the valuable information she had thus secured to the man who waited, the man who had planned, the man who seemed to know all about the remarkable story of Abner Morris' duplicity far back in the dim past.

Thus, while Miles and his sweetheart rested easy under the belief that the secret was unknown to a living soul besides Odette, Senor Carlos could quietly make all preparations necessary to snatch the coveted spoils, and they might not be any the wiser for weeks or months.

Some of these things flashed through the mind of the young sailor as he stood there, looking upon the strange scene in which his beloved Odette figured. A fierce satisfaction also took possession of him in the realization of the fact that because of his inspiration with regard to wiring Doctor Louise he had been able to reach home, armed with information that enabled him to penetrate the intricacies of the terrible plot.

No longer he hesitated, but strode into the room.

The woman heard him for the first time as he passed the doorway, for she had been deeply engrossed in her nefarious work, and drinking in what Odette was murmuring, so that for the moment the outside world had no share in her attention.

She understood instantly what had happened, and that the seance was over, for that day at least.

Immediately she waved her hands in a negative way before the girl at the same time uttering a low word of command, for Odette hesitated in her talk, and allowed her voice to die away.

When the woman turned her head she had one of her alluring smiles with which to greet the intruder, whom she chose to believe had just happened at the door; but the charm of that sweet look was gone for Miles, who knew her for what she was, an arrant imposter.

"H'sh! do not awaken her, please. She complained of a severe headache, and as I have always been successful in soothing a sufferer of that description into a refreshing sleep I yielded to her entreaties, and the result is charming. When the dear girl awakens, her pain will have quite vanished," she said, blandly.

The look upon the face of the wireless man told her, however, that he knew she was prevaricating, though she showed not the least sign of weakness.

"What you say is a tissue of lies, madam. I was hurrying home to tear the mask from your face, and expose you for what you were, an arrant humbug. Thank Heaven I reached here just in time. Mr. Saunders, this woman must leave your house as soon as she can get her stuff together. It is not safe for Odette to be under her baneful influence another hour. You can see what she was trying to do, placing her in an hypnotic sleep, and then commanding her to tell certain things that are greatly desired by a scoundrel of our acquaintance," he exclaimed.

"Indeed, you make strange charges, young man," observed the woman, with assumed surprise written upon her countenance, as she looked appealingly toward the old farmer and his wife; "you must have dreamed all these things. Tomorrow you will no doubt be sorry for having said them. In the practice of my profession I have met with strange experiences, but this caps the climax. A physician has to endure much, and show a spirit of philosophy; perhaps I can even forgive you, seeing that your love for the young girl would be apt to make you suspicious."

"Fine words butter no parsnips, madam. You might as well understand that you have reached the end of your trail here in this house. When my suspicions reached a point where they began to assume tangible shape I sent a wireless to a friend of mine in Washington, who chanced to know the real Doctor Louise, and his description of her personal appearance was so vastly different from your looks that I knew I had found you out. So I telegraphed to the home of Doctor Louise, to ask if she was out of the city, and here is the reply that came back. It spells failure for your clever plans."

Then in mocking tones he read aloud the contents of the message.

Farmer Saunders and his good wife looked at each other aghast.

It was almost unbelievable that such things had been going on under the roof of their modest little home.

The woman laughed aloud.

She realized that it was no longer policy to deny the soft impeachment, and the brazen side of her character began to show—gone was that suave expression that for days had marked her features, and Miles saw again the look that had flashed athwart her features on the one occasion when she had glanced at Odette, only the spirit of anticipated triumph now gave way to a sneer of defiance.

"I see that you have been too smart for me, young man. For once I have been caught napping, and with the goods on. Since my usefulness in this house seems to have departed, and none of you will have further faith in my headache cure, why, I suppose I might as well cut my delightful vacation short, and return to Washington as soon as convenient. Perhaps Mr. Saunders may not be so cruel as to put a poor helpless woman out of doors in the night time; and by morning I shall have my trunk packed," she said, sneeringly.

"As to that, Mr. Saunders will exercise his own judgment; but before you leave this room be so good as to restore the young lady to her normal condition. I understand something about this terrible power you exercise over your chosen subjects, and insist upon it that you revoke your influence immediately," and Miles bent a stern look upon the woman that told how deeply his feelings had been stirred.

She looked at first as though ready to defy him; but apparently thinking better of it shrugged her shoulders and answered:

"Certainly I shall do so. It would be too bad to leave poor Odette subject to the wish of the unwelcome guest. And really I have grown quite fond of the dear child too, and even felt some compunctions of conscience about using her gentle nature for the fulfillment of my plan. You smile at that, but it is true. She will be all right in a minute."

Placing herself directly in front of the girl she moved those white hands to and fro with a few mysterious passages, and then giving Odette a sudden shake she exclaimed:

"Wake up, Odette! Ah! is your headache better, dear?"

The girl had started violently, like a person abruptly aroused from sound slumber, and looked with staring eyes at the woman; then turned toward Miles, who, springing forward snatched her to his heart, as if to interpose his stout figure between her precious person and the contaminating presence of the scheming madam.

"Go to your own room, and be thankful that we do not think to give you over to the authorities as a base imposter. Only for the notoriety involved it would be the proper punishment for such conduct as yours. A snake in the grass deserves little consideration," he said sternly.

"You are inclined to be very complimentary, young man. Sometimes it is dangerous to treat a fallen enemy with contumely and contempt. A snake may even be scotched and not killed. I shall be apt to remember your words long after you have forgotten them," she frowned.

"Leave us!" said Miles, and the expression on his face was one that compelled obedience; so she glided from the room, going to her own.

Odette was staring first at one and then at the other of the two, utterly unable to comprehend what it all meant; for the influence of the hypnotist had been strong upon her, and she was struggling between her natural love for Miles and this new feeling for the pretended Doctor Louise.

So the story was told again in a more comprehensive form, of how Miles had his suspicions first aroused by the peculiar glance the woman had cast upon Odette when she thought no one saw her remove her mask for a second, and betray exultation—then down through the sending of the wireless messages to Friend Billy, and finally the ride to the village for the purpose of telegraphing to the home of the well known woman doctor, to ascertain whether she were absent from her customary haunts, with what dazzling success we have already seen.

By degrees Odette, becoming stronger, and losing her faith in the fascinating guest, saw through the whole plot, and she clung tighter to Miles as she realized to what monstrous lengths her enemy was willing to go in order to accomplish his sworn vow.

"Oh! if those wretched diamonds were only safe in the possession of some bank or trust company, how it would ease my mind. I shall never know another minute's peace until that has been done. After you are gone, Miles, I should be afraid to be alone a second, for fear lest they spring some new and amazing scheme upon me. We must devise some plan whereby they are taken in charge. I refuse to be the custodian of the fatal trust any longer," she exclaimed.

"And you shall be relieved from the thankless task," he said, with the light of determination in his eyes; "already has it burdened your young life too long. It is a pity you could not find a trace of the old money-lender's heirs. Together we will go to the city and put the case before the head of some big detective agency, asking for advice, and that he will safeguard the gems until they can be safely housed in a bank vault, where they may rot for all you and I care. Our future happiness does not depend in the least upon their retention in the family."

But Miles did not know at that moment what new and strange developments would come up in the near future concerning those same precious stones, surrounded with a halo of romance and the shadow of crime; else he might not have been quite so positive in his remarks.

Those same fated diamonds were fated to cling to the fortunes of Odette Morris for some time yet; it had been her ancestor who had purloined them, and the last of the family would have still further trouble in getting rid of them, since a trust covering more than fifty years is not easily dissolved.

The woman did not face them at supper, and Mrs. Saunders carried something up to her room, coming down immediately after to say that the apartment was empty, and a note on the table requested them to forward the little steamer trunk to a given address in Washington.

Miles was just as well pleased, for he felt a natural resentment against this unscrupulous schemer and tool of the Brazilian that he feared might influence him to act in an ungentlemanly manner when they met in the morning.

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE RULES.

Although he affected to make light of the affair while Odette was present, and in this fashion cheered her up, Miles knew that they had a most determined enemy to deal with, and that the man who had engineered this last cunning plan to gain desired information would not hesitate at anything calculated to further his desire with regard to the diamonds.

Three times had he made an attempt to win out, and each effort seemed to be marked with new cleverness and audacity.

Where would this end?

He could not have it go on further, lest something terrible happen that would endanger the safety or sanity of his beloved Odette.

If he could only once lay hands on the scoundrel, he felt that he would be able to put it out of his power to personally attend to these skillfully laid plans; but when he worked through tools it was harder.

First the endeavor of the plotting Brazilian to make love to the girl, so that he might kill two birds with one stone; then the midnight robbery, when the thief carried off the little workbox under the impression that it held the valuables for which all this trouble was being taken; and now last but not least the hiring of this clever hypnotist to win the affection of Odette, and then through the exercise of her black art force the secret of the treasure's hiding-place from her lips while in a trance.

No wonder Miles was saying to himself, "What next?"

The brain that could conceive such astounding schemes must be too fertile in resources to stop at this point because they had gone wrong; and sooner or later it could be set down as certain that the game would be taken up and carried on through another channel, the nature of which they could not imagine.

Miles was firmly determined that not another day should elapse without something being done to relieve his sweetheart from the onerous burden she had been carrying these three years back.

Many had suffered for that long past sin of Abner Morris, and it was about time in his mind that the curse were broken.

If so be the real owner of the brilliants persisted in remaining in obscurity despite the many efforts to reveal his identity, then some institution must bear the burden of the trust, which had become too heavy for one pair of shoulders.

In his heart he was himself disposed to add a curse of his own to that which the robbed money-lender had laid upon the ill-gotten diamonds; for he realized that this had been the secret of Odette's pale face much of the time that he had known her.

Miles exerted himself to the utmost to appear jovial on this evening, hoping to counteract the influence which the presence and hypnotic powers of the remarkable woman had had upon Odette.

He sang the songs she loved, and forced her to play for him the merry airs of the latest comic operas; until the Saunders declared they had not known such a delightful evening since his last furlough, previous to the sailing of the battleship fleet to the other side of the world.

If it was bright and gay within the house it could not be said the night was correspondingly fine, for about nine the threatening storm broke, and between the rain and the wind and the crash of thunder, the elements seemed to be having a wild concert of their own outside.

When the hour had drawn not far from midnight, the little company began to talk of separating for the night.

Mrs. Saunders had promised to sleep with Odette, and their window was to be kept fast closed and locked against intruders; while Miles vowed he did not mean to close his eyes, but would patrol the house until dawn, such was the feeling of anticipation and alarm that had been engendered in their minds by the bold effort of the conspirators.

"Are you feeling yourself, now, dearest?" he asked, tenderly, as they separated.

"Why, yes. Now that my eyes have been opened to the truth I realize that it was only when in the presence of the woman I had those strange sensations in my head, and that drowsy feeling began to creep over me. At a distance she can never affect me again, and I am on my guard now. I wonder——"

"What?" he asked, encouragingly.

"I was just thinking that perhaps you may have heard what I was saying at the time you burst so abruptly, as you tell me, into my room, and found me in that hypnotic condition," she went on.

Miles gave a sudden start, and his eyes contracted.

"I hadn't thought of that before. By Jove! what if she had accomplished all she wanted before I broke up the seance?" he ejaculated.

"What do you mean, dear?" inquired Odette, seeing that he was worried anew.

"Of course you don't remember the slightest thing about what was done, or with regard to anything you said?"

"It is an utter blank. Only for your telling me I should never believe that I was asleep, and that woman asking me questions. I'm sorry, Miles dear, but I am utterly unable to give you any assistance along that line," she answered.

"Think of all that has happened, and see if it doesn't look suspiciously like she had won her point before I came—that you had been influenced to divulge——"

Odette gave a cry of anguish.

"Not the secret of the hiding-place of the diamonds——oh! that would be too cruel, after it has been safeguarded all these years. Is that what you mean, Miles?" she cried, appealingly.

Miles' jaw set in a very aggressive manner.

"That's just what I meant to imply. It would account for her sneering manner as she turned to see me enter the room; as well as the later willingness to submit to my dictation; and she seemed to be a woman who would not ordinarily allow a mere man to order her around. Then stop again to consider how she slipped away after asking to remain until morning. There was a deep motive in that game. Perhaps she feared that we might change our minds by morning, and have her arrested after all; but it's my opinion the real cause of her flitting was the fact that she had gained the valuable intelligence she came after, and was in a hurry to cash in with the Brazilian schemer who sent her here."

"Then my secret is no longer safe, since it is in her possession?" gasped Odette.

"I'm afraid not. And by this time it has doubtless been told to our persistent friend from the South, who will lose no time in utilizing the knowledge obtained through the Black Arts," responded the other, grimly.

Odette began to show signs of indignation.

"I am provoked," she said, stamping her foot to emphasize her words, "to think that that man should be the one to profit by the sacred trust bequeathed to me by my father. I have always been willing and even anxious to restore the stolen diamonds to some heir of the original owner, but to know they have fallen into the hands of an unscrupulous adventurer will cause me regrets all through the remainder of my life. Can nothing be done to baffle him still, dear Miles?"

"Perhaps it may not yet be too late, if you have the courage of your convictions and will consent to guide us to the spot where this fabulous treasure lies hidden away. If it is outdoors it is a wretched night for you to be abroad, and under those circumstances perhaps it would be better to tell us the way, and let us go alone to unearth the plunder and bring it here," he suggested.

Odette shook her head vigorously.

"No, no, I could never consent to that. This legacy has been in the keeping of the Morris family all these decades, and it should be a Morris who finally takes the diamonds from their resting place, and makes a decided step toward their restoration to the legitimate heirs. Perhaps in that way alone can the curse that was put upon them, and which has cost us dear, be banished. If you think it best that we should go now to secure them, I insist upon being one of the party, and guiding you to the spot. Now, don't shake your head and say no, Miles, for in this one particular thing I must be determined. If the diamonds are saved mine must be the hand to rescue them from the threatening peril."

He looked down into her face, and saw the light of resolution shining there; and like the wise fellow that he was gave in.

"So be it, dearest, but you must wrap up securely, for the night isn't the finest in the world for wandering about. Do we have to go far away from the house in our will-o'-the-wisp chase; for I take it that the place is outside from what you've admitted?" he observed.

"Yes, it is some little distance; but I will put on my stout shoes, and make sure I am well protected. I think the rain has stopped, though the wind still blows, and the lightning plays. Give me just five minutes, please."

Saying which she hurried to her room.

Miles turned to the farmer.

"You will go with us, Mr. Saunders?" he asked.

"And glad of the chance, that is if the good wife isn't afraid to stay alone," returned the other; and at this the dame laughed, a little nervously saying she was used to being left by herself in the house, and should have no dread of anything happening.

"Get your gun, then, please," continued Miles; "for there is no telling what a desperate crowd we may run up against, and I don't believe in taking unnecessary chances."

The farmer's wife began to look anxious at this, and when Miles came back to the living-room after securing his own revolver he smiled to see Mrs. Saunders there, with a waterproof and rubbers on, and holding in her hand a tremendous horse pistol that

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GENTLE JABS.

And all the world loves to laugh with a laugher.

It will be difficult to make a fool-proof automobile.

Even a charitable pugilist is sure to be close-fisted.

Worry never accomplished anything worth while.

Second thoughts are best in a case of love at first sight.

Some men feel more at home if their wives are away.

Let us be thankful for ice cream and even for cold cash.

When a barber gets out of one scrape he gets into another.

Speed mania is a disease, but the messenger boy is an immune.

We are still patiently awaiting the advent of wireless politics.

Formerly the people burned witches. Now they roast politicians.

Occasionally the man with an eagle eye proves to be a human vulture.

You would never suspect how smart some people are if they didn't tell you.

Economy on your part would be stinginess on the part of your neighbor.

A man feels as ill at ease in a dry-goods store as a woman does in a tobacco shop.

When two women kiss it doesn't mean any more than when two men shake hands.

Many an alleged blessing in disguise wouldn't be a blessing but for the disguise.

Occasionally we meet a man whose train of thought reminds us of a row of flat cars.

One often wonders why the woman members of a burlesque show require dressing rooms.

Every man has a future before him, but too often his past behind him acts as a handicap.

Life-insurance men who refused to take chances on the lives of aviators made a good guess.

It's difficult to convince a man who is broke that happiness can't be purchased with money.

The candidate who throws mud is less apt to win than the one who comes down with the "dust."

Hope is an excellent thing to have, but it is one of the things a pawnbroker will not advance anything on.

Many a man fails to make good because he spends most of his time trying to prove that luck is against him.

Poverty may be a blessing, but every man is willing to turn his share of the blessing over to the other fellow.

Sometimes a girl pretends to whistle for the purpose of calling a young man's attention to the lovely pucker she can get on her lips.

Persons who condemned the methods of the English suffragettes should pause to note that a woman-suffrage bill has gone to second reading in Parliament. Would ladylike requests have pushed it along so far?

(Continued from page five.)

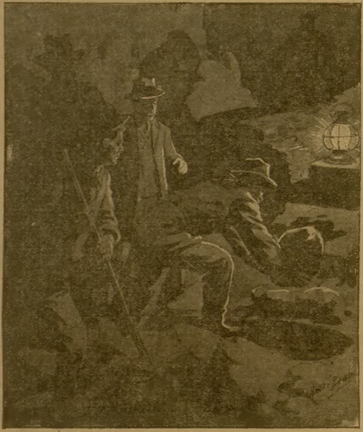
was a delightful mate for the ancient musket sported by her spouse.

"I've concluded to go along too. Perhaps numbers may count for something if it happens that we have trouble with those scamps. Anyhow, I've concluded that I don't want to be left alone; and as you need Jared why you'll have to take me in the bargain. Now don't look serious at sight of this little persuader, for I've handled it many a time, and killed a crow with it once, so there's little danger any of you may get injured by my carelessness."

"I give in, Mrs. Saunders, and have no doubt you will prove a valuable acquisition to our company in case there is any trouble. And here comes Odette, looking as if she might be ready for any stress of weather. Now, if you are all ready let us go out and head for the mysterious place where the treasure is hidden away. For your sake, dearest, I wish the job were well over, and ourselves back again under the snug shelter of this roof."

Miles threw a protecting arm around his betrothed as he spoke, and the look she gave him spoke volumes with regard to her confidence in his ability to thus care for her, no matter what the impending peril.

Such a look as that has nerved men to brave untold dangers, to battle with the terrors of field and flood, to wrest fortune's smiles from the grasp of the world, and accomplish all manner of wonders; for it is inspired by love, and love rules the universe.



A lantern stood upon a flat rock.

CHAPTER X.

BY A LANTERN'S LIGHT.

As Odette had said, the storm seemed to have exhausted its fury, and was passing down in the east, growling and flashing as if not satisfied with what havoc it may have carried in its wake, and threatening to return for a wider sweep.

The rain had about ceased, though the wind still rushed wildly through the trees, making all manner of queer moaning sounds, extremely dismal.

Back of the clouds there was a moon not far above the horizon, being in her last quarter, and this seemed to render it unnecessary to light the lantern which Mr. Saunders was carrying, looking to the time when they might need it in securing the valuable plunder which was the object of their midnight quest.

"Shall we need a spade or any sort of tool?" queried Miles, before they started.

"I do not think so, from what my father told me. They are not secreted where old Abner placed them—indeed, I think they have been hidden in several other spots since that day. Isn't it a singular coincidence about the storm?" Odette remarked, with a shiver, as a white flash of lightning whipped from one cloud to another with dazzling brilliancy, and the growl of the thunder soon followed.

"What do you mean?" asked Miles, as they began to walk away.

"You remember that on the night old Abner was tempted to take one of the stones out of the bag it was also storming, and an avenging bolt of lightning struck him down even as his avaricious hand was touching the accursed gems. Oh! I do hope and pray there may be no terrible significance in that coincidence."

He laughed at her thought.

"The cases are not parallel by any means. Abner wanted to take one of the gems for his own personal use, and the consequences wrought his destruction. On our part the exact opposite is the case, for we are going to all this trouble just to keep the confounded stones from being stolen by a bold adventurer, and hence we should be protected by this invisible hand that hovers over the treasure-trove, rather than injury. Don't worry about that. The only thing that gives me the least concern is a mortal enemy. If we can only outwit that cunning viper of a senor, and snatch the diamonds from beyond his clutches I'll be willing to accept all the other risk without a grimace. Now we're off," declared Miles, sturdily.

It was no night for a woman to be abroad, especially tramping through the tall wet grass, and over the turf; but nothing could have kept Odette from leading them to the place where her secret lay hidden, and these discomforts would be forgotten once they had returned to the shelter of the house.

They walked four abreast, Saunders assisting his good wife, though she seemed well able to do her part in the adventure without any help.

All of them knew shortly where the strange midnight walk was about to fetch up.

There was a ruin lying some few hundred yards back of the farmhouse, where the original home of the Morris family had stood.

This had been a fine old mansion, with wings and turrets, a picture of which Miles had seen; and in their love dreams these two had even aspired to some day, when good fortune came to reward earnest labor, and money flowed into their coffers, build just such a home in the old place, and restore the glory of the Morris branch to something like its past.

But fire had wiped out the grand old pile, and a great heap of ruins marked the site of past grandeur.

Many times had Odette lingered around this spot, her eyes scrutinizing one place in particular, and yet never venturing to muster up enough courage to pry under the heap of stones marking a Dutch oven, where, according to the story told by her father on his dying bed, the legacy of the diamonds lay snugly reposing.

That awful curse had always restrained her impulse to gaze upon the fateful stones, and for three years she had been their guardian without ever having laid eyes upon their brilliant facets.

And now she was leading her lover to the dreadful spot, with the elements in much the same condition of disturbance as they had been on that night so many years ago when the original purloiner of the gems had stolen out to finally brave the curse and dispose of one of the diamonds.

It was not as light as Miles had expected, but he kept hoping the moon might peep out through some opening in the clouds at any moment, and afford them all the illumination needed, so he refrained from asking the farmer to utilize the lantern.

Nothing was said about the risk of being heard, but from some intuition all of them seemed to understand that it was better to refrain from talking, and so as they walked not a word passed between them.

It was a typical night for strange deeds and weird experiences. Miles could not help thinking as they moved along in this style—there seemed to be all the needful stage ghouls to be brought into the drama, with that spitting lightning, and that hoarse note of thunder down along the horizon.

But if they were a resurrection party it was not of the usual type, since the object of their solicitude was a packet of precious stones and not a subject for the dissecting-room table.

As they drew closer to the place of the ruin Miles endeavored to pierce the semi-gloom ahead, in his anxiety to learn whether they had been anticipated in their sudden plan to recover the loot of old Abner Morris.

The more he considered the actions of the woman hypnotist the stronger became his conclusion that she had really drawn the secret of the treasure from the lips of Odette while the girl lay under her influence; and that she had hastened to convey the intelligence to her employer.

That Senor Carlos had not been further than the village was also possible for he may have felt too great anxiety concerning the success or failure of his new deal to remain in Washington, and would want to be close at hand to take advantage of any favoring circumstance.

And quite a few hours had elapsed since the woman had slipped away from the farmhouse—she would have had plenty of time to reach the village, even to get a message to Washington, and the senor to come out on the ten-forty train, if by chance he had been away from Virginia soil.

Odette's hand convulsively clutching his arm warned Miles that her eyes had discovered what had just become visible to his own gaze.

This was what might seem to be the glimmer of a lantern down among the heaps of stones and debris marking the foundations of the great former house.

Undoubtedly the enemy was on the spot, and at work.

It thrilled Miles to realize this fact, and he gripped his weapon with the determination to shoot to injure if it came to a show of arms; for knowing the desperate nature of the man who had proven himself to be money-mad, he did not doubt but that the Brazilian would be armed and ready to fight for the possession of the spoils.

Saunders could be heard cocking his gun, and mentally Miles pitied those poor wretches if ever that old musket of Rebellion days was discharged in their direction, for it must be loaded with a miscellaneous collection of missiles that would carry with the execution of shrapnel.

They advanced cautiously now, and it seemed as if they hardly drew their breath, so anxious had they become to preserve absolute silence.

At such a critical time it seems to the excited one as though his or her heart pounds with the rapidity and noise of a trip-hammer; and the wonder of it is that the racket does not immediately engage the attention of the enemy.

The closer they drew to the ruins the more able were they to see the glow from the lantern; and it was now possible to also hear sounds above the moan of the wind.

These latter seemed to consist of the clink of stones that were being tumbled about, and the murmur of human voices.

From the former signs Miles knew that the seekers after the treasure had evidently as yet failed to come across it, else would they have immediately ceased all labor and betaken themselves off.

This gave him considerable satisfaction; not that he was personally interested in the retention of the gems, but Odette seemed to set great store by them, and considered that it was her duty as the last of Abner Morris' descendants to continue to guard the trust, and what interested her absorbed his attention too.

Something more caused him to take a grim pleasure in the fact that they were apparently yet in good time—when a man has striven to accomplish a certain thing, no matter how distasteful the task may have been in the start, by his very persistence he works up an artificial interest in the carrying out of the game; and so it was in the present case.

Miles would never rest content until he had placed those plagued diamonds far beyond the covetous fingers of Senor Carlos, and possibly visited condign punishment upon the adventurous plotter for the trouble he had caused Odette.

Now the newcomers were at the verge of the gaping hole marking the cellars of the former mansion, and the scene lay before them.

A lantern stood upon a flat rock, once a doorstep, and lighted up the surroundings feebly, yet with sufficient power to disclose the presence of several men, who were stooping down eagerly tossing stones, both large and small, aside.

From the pressure on his arm Miles knew that the spot where they worked was indeed the very place which had been for three long years watched and guarded by the solicitous girl, after she had been entrusted with the terrible secret of the Morris curse by her dying father.

At the same time he knew that again for the fourth time the plans of the plotting Senor Carlos had been defeated by Fate; so that it would indeed seem as if some favoring influence must guard those wretched stones until that day when their rightful and legal owner came along to claim his inheritance.

The Brazilian was apparently up against a harder proposition than he had ever tackled before in all his life; despite his bulldog tactics of holding on, he had made little progress up to this time; and now when it began to look as though he might be on the right road, and the treasure ready to fall into his eager hand, another grievous disappointment awaited him.

The question was whether they had better wait until these parties had done all the labor, and uncovered the precious legacy before showing their hand, or proceed to call a halt upon their efforts, while the result was still uncertain.

Miles concluded that it would be taking too great a risk to delay.

So slippery a chap as the senor might manage to dart away at the moment when the expose came, leaving his accomplices to face the music, and cover his retreat; and in thus eloping he would perhaps retain possession of the little box containing the fortune that had been the magnet drawing him to the shores of the United States—the treasure that lay at the foot of the rainbow of his hopes.

Such a happening would spell ruin for Odette's cause, and after the folly had been perpetrated they might find it difficult if not impossible to remedy matters.

Thus it became absolutely necessary that they move at once, and nip further proceedings in the bud.

Finding the ear of the excited Saunders he whispered a few words that explained his intentions; after which Miles bade Odette sink down upon the ground behind some loose stones that chanced to lie conveniently near.

CHAPTER XI.

OVER THE RUINS.

It would seem as though the fellows who were so diligently scooping out an excavation in the cellar of the old mansion had no thought of anything else save the business upon which they were engaged.

They had no reason to fear interruption, for there was not one chance in a thousand that anybody would approach near enough to the ruins to discover what was going on there.

The wind, moaning and whistling through the trees and around the portions of the massive walls yet remaining erect, aided in keeping the advance of our friends from being overheard, since it smothered any sound they may have made.

And now they stood looking down upon the operations of the treasure-hunters, and holding the game in their hands, as it seemed.

Senor Carlos had truly said that "he laughed loudest who laughed last," but the trouble with him seemed to be that he could never get to that final point, so as to indulge in that boisterous cachinnation.

"Follow me," said Miles, as he sprang down the little incline and found himself among the ruins.

He had a double object in doing this—in the first place to have remained up above would have made them splendid targets for the enemy if they chose to take advantage of their opportunity, since the little force of Miles Hamilton must be outlined against the sky, while they were hidden in the gloomy interior, once the lantern was smashed; then again, it was the ardent hope of the young fellow to get within striking distance of the Brazilian, so that he might in some measure pay back a portion at least of the big debt he felt was owing the senor for his persistent actions toward Odette.

Saunders immediately followed him into the cellar, and the dame, not wishing to be left alone there upon the brink gave a shriek for her husband to catch her, and launched herself boldly into space.

She fell in a heap, but immediately struggled to a sitting position, and began looking eagerly around for signs of the enemy.

Just as Miles had expected the interrupted diamond hunters had kicked over the lantern at the very first sign of trouble, thus bringing darkness upon the place where they were crouching.

"Surrender!" shouted Miles, with the intention of distracting the attention of the others, until he could find means of rounding them up; "we have you surrounded, and if you try to run it will be as much as your lives are worth, for we'll just riddle you with shot. Throw up your arms, do you hear?"

A laugh answered him, a bitter laugh, with nothing of merriment in it, for Senor Carlos knew that again had his fortunes taken a plunge just when success seemed within his grasp, and he was naturally feeling anything but cheery.

Then came a pistol shot from the spot where the men were last seen, evidently fired at random, and more in the hope of frightening the newcomers than with any idea of winging one of them.

It was answered with a squeal from the good dame, who sat upon the debris of the wall in the same spot where she had landed; and then followed the rapid crack! crack! of her old horse pistol, both barrels being fired in rapid succession.

Saunders was also much wrought up by the thought that the wife of his bosom had possibly been injured, and he now followed the discharge of her weapon by sending the contents of his big musket over across the cellar.

The report was like that of a young field gun, and part of the wall came toppling down with a crash, fortunately not touching our friends in its fall.

It were well for these wretches, thought Miles, if they happened to be snugly lying behind comfortable stones at the time that cannon went off, else would their anatomy have been scattered far and wide.

But Miles held his fire.

He considered that in the first place there had been no occasion for shooting, since not a sign of the enemy had been seen, beyond the flash when the first revolver shot went off; and then again, if he were so silly as to empty his weapon and the foe still lived, they would hold the whip hand, and could dictate terms as they pleased.

Miles had been in the navy too long not to have imbibed some spirit of discretion to supplement his natural valor.

But the play was only part over.

The force of the senor still hovered somewhere near, hiding in the ruins, and apparently averse to taking flight, since that would entail a hardship, in that they must entirely abandon the diamonds, now so very close to their hands.

What could they be doing—were they stealing silently away, or was it the policy of that soldier of fortune, Rodriguez, to stick the thing out now and fight to the very last gasp rather than abandon his quest?

If Saunders and his wife had only refrained from shooting how much better for the prospect of ultimate success on the part of the treasure's defenders; now it devolved almost entirely upon Miles to accomplish the surrender or flight of the rogues.

He had counted three of them before the lantern was extinguished, and one had undoubtedly been the man from Brazil.

Who the others were mattered little, for it could be safely guessed that they must be tools of the senor, and consequently men of his own adventurous and unscrupulous stripe, who would fight at the drop of the hat for gold or revenge. Such fellows are to be found in every city, by the drove, if only one knows where to look for them.

There was only one thing to be done, and that to chase them away.

Accordingly Miles, who had been groping along the ground until he discovered a heap of stones the proper size, began hurling these in rapid-fire fashion in the direction of the Dutch-oven site, where he fancied he could hear some one still eagerly delving among the debris, as though loth to give over the quest, so near its successful conclusion.

This bombardment was followed by a series of howls and some loud swear words in very plain American, proving that these assistants whom Carlos had introduced into the game did not hail from the land that called him a degenerate son.

Saunders saw that he could be of some assistance in this sort of business, so he too got busy, and the way those missiles flew through the air was a caution.

It was the part of folly to remain anywhere near the scope of their descent, and from the scrambling that ensued Miles was fain to believe the enemy had sought safety in flight.

He made his way forward and reached the place where the mad excavating had been going on; but the senor and his legions had vanished.

"Odette!" called Miles, aloud.

She answered him immediately, and scrambled down into the excavation to reach his side, being all of a tremble, for she had feared lest he might have been injured in the battle between the rival treasure hunters.

"Is this the place?" he asked eagerly, wishing to have the thing done with, and his sweetheart safe in the shelter of the house before the enemy mustered up courage enough to return to the attack.

"Yes, yes, just where they were digging. Oh! what if we had not come out here, but left it until morning. How wise you were, dear Miles, and how brave to chase them off in that way," she exclaimed.

"Oh! piffle, that didn't take much courage, my dear. They proved to be a set of timid hearts after all, and fled without striking back at us. You say this is the right spot. Well, we must get to work and unearth that miserable old bunch of diamonds as soon as possible. This air is bad for you;" but she was not deceived, knowing that he was concerned more over the coming back of those desperate men than the damp atmosphere, the still flashing lightning or the possible return of the storm.

When the electric fluid darted across the eastern sky something bright caught the eye of Miles just under his feet, and stooping down he laid hold of a pistol of the bulldog pattern, an ugly weapon, which must have slipped from the hand of one of the rascals when they ducked so hastily to avoid the shower of stones.

"Bully!" he exclaimed, "here's something for you Saunders. Why, it's got something sticky on it; I declare if it isn't blood, and your good wife must have winged one of those harpies when she let fly. I wish I had another pistol for her. She'd make good use of it. Now watch me dig!"

He went at the job with even more vim than the former searchers had shown, for the urgency was great, and he kept worrying for fear lest the senor, creeping back with his black heart filled with fury, should take a notion to send several shots at the little group as seen during a brief illumination, and one of the leaden pellets find lodgment in the precious form of Odette.

Such a calamity would appear to be too monstrous for a reality, and yet it was always possible.

Deeper down went Miles, throwing the stones that formed the mound over the ruins of the Dutch oven aside in rapid succession, so that it seemed fairly to rain missiles.

Several times he halted to catch his breath, and on these occasions he would bend far down and grope around in the excavation, as if hoping that he might discover the object for which all this labor was being wrought.

"Mr. Saunders, light the lantern, please. I must see what I'm doing. Then climb out of here, and with your gun ready patrol around the ruins, particularly on the side where they left. Here, madam, please take my revolver, and do you accompany your husband, covering as much ground as possible. Odette, darling, listen to me, and do what I ask. Sit down behind that mound of rocks, and do not move until I give you permission. I am the captain of this expedition, you know, and obedience is the first law of the navy. Go, dear," he said.

"I understand why you say it; you want to take all the risk yourself, by remaining here exposed. It is not fair," she expostulated.

"No, but it would be folly to expose you when there is no necessity. I have to remain here and work. Please go, and in so doing give me courage to continue. If it rested with me alone I'd see those blamed diamonds in Guinea before I'd let you risk a hair of your pretty head to protect them; and what's the use anyhow, when we don't own a jot or tittle of the blooming things. Now, I'll be sure to sing out if I make any discovery. That's nice of you, little girl."

Odette went, because, as he had cleverly put it, she could do no good by remaining, and her presence, exposed to danger as she was, only made him nervous, hindering his work.

So he went at the task with even more vim, since there was now no chance of his hitting any of his companions with the stones he cast aside.

Whoever among Odette's people had made this mound, probably her father, had builded with considerable pains, and an immense amount of material, since the other party had been delving for some time before our friends' arrival on the scene; and yet it took Miles all of ten minutes to reach the bottom of the cache, when he gave utterance to an exclamation that reached the waiting ears of Odette.

"Oh! what is it—have you found the box, dear? I hope so, I am so tired of all this excitement—and so afraid something will happen to you. You are lifting something out—oh! can it be the unlucky legacy of the Morris family at last brought to the light of day? I am shaking so I can hardly stand," she exclaimed.

This strong story of love and intrigue will be concluded in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming year.

The Troublesome Pipe.

William H. Wood, a theatrical manager, says it took him a long time to learn to smoke a pipe, and came near causing domestic trouble.

It was right after his wedding that Mr. Wood decided to smoke a pipe instead of cigars for economical reasons. Mrs. Wood was a very attractive bride, who thought of nothing else but the happiness of her liege lord.

At night after dinner Mr. Wood, according to his own story, would sit down by the open fireplace and puff contentedly at a sweet briar pipe. He thought it strange that the biting sensation which clings to each pipe until it is broken in remained so long with his "smokers."

One night the biting sensation was more than he could stand.

"Mary do you know whether any one has been tampering with my pipes?" he inquired.

"No," came a soft answer. "But what is the matter with them, dearie?" she continued, solicitously.

"Oh, nothing," he replied, "only it seems as if all my pipes are new and I can never get one broke in right," he added sorrowfully.

"Well, that's easily explained," she began. "You see, it's like this, William. I thought the best way to keep your pipes clean was to get new ones, so I have been buying you a new one every day."

There will be fewer fatalities from the Fourth of July prize fight than from the Fourth of July pistol.

WINNING THE MEDAL.

Ravenor came hurrying through the hall from the library, where he and Col. Holt had been enjoying a quiet cigar. The opening bars of a waltz came to his ears and quickened his steps. Anything else he could miss with equanimity, but not this waltz.

At the farther end of the hall he almost collided with a tall, dark girl who stepped through an open door. Ravenor halted with an abruptness that sacrificed dignity.

"Ah," he said with infinite relief. "I was just coming to claim my waltz."

She smiled a bit wearily. "Must we dance?" she inquired. "I'm very tired."

"You look tired, poor child," Ravenor declared. "Have you seen the colonel's new orchids? They're really worth looking at. Suppose we sit out in the conservatory?"

Ravenor drew her arm through his hand led her down the hall unutterably happy in the thought that the next half-hour, at least, would be jointly theirs. He pulled a couple of chairs beneath a friendly looking palm, and seated himself where he could get just the view of her profile he wanted.

"Where are the orchids?" she demanded.

"Oh, we'll have a look at them presently," he said easily. "But first let's sit here and rest. Don't you think it's a restful place here, all these soft lights and these dull greens?"

"Very," she replied demurely.

"Now, just get good and rested," he advised ever solicitously. "The evening isn't half gone yet and I know your card is filled. You see I place the happiness of others above my own. I sacrifice the one dance that I could claim that you may fulfil your other engagements."

"Magnanimous soul!" she laughed.

"But since you won't dance, you must pay dearly for it," said he.

"Indeed!" she said, with a slight lift of her eyebrows.

"Precisely," he asserted. "You must pay by listening very meekly to all I have to say to you."

"Behold I am meekness itself," she said.

"Good," he laughed. "Don't you feel strange in so novel a role?"

"Oh, not abnormally so."

"Well," he said slowly. "I want to make a confession."

She looked at him with exaggerated alarm. "You haven't purloined any of the silver, have you?" she asked breathlessly.

"No," he said gloomily. "It's worse than that."

"Nor forgotten to give the butler a half dollar?" she went on.

He shook his head.

"What is this terrible load on your conscience, then?"

"I confess to abject cowardice," said he.

"Is that all?" she said.

"Isn't that enough?" he returned.

"Never having suffered seriously from that malady, I'm in no position to state," she said.

"It's a terrible thing," he said mournfully. "Of all things on earth, a coward is the most pitiful object."

"What form does your fear take?" she asked. "Spiders, mice, or what?"

"It is a woman," he declared.

"You're somewhat of a misfit in this age, I fear," she observed drily.

"So it seems to me," he acquiesced. "Nevertheless, try as I will to overcome it, the fear is omnipresent. In her presence I'm a babbling schoolboy."

"Too bad!" she said rather indifferently. "Hadn't we better look at the orchids?"

Ravenor smiled slowly. He leaned forward in his chair.

"But because I've been a coward in the part," he said, ignoring her suggestion, "it doesn't follow that I shall continue to be one in the future. Indeed, I intend to break the bonds of cowardice tonight. I intend to drive my halting tongue to its task for once."

"I wish you much success," she said.

"There is no excuse for a man being an arrant coward forever," he went on.

"I agree with you," said she.

"Napoleon didn't let the Alps stop him——"

"Hurrah for Napoleon!" she interposed.

"And I shall cross the moral Alps," said he.

"Hurrah for you!" said she.

"I shall ask her tonight to marry me," he declared.

"Show me the orchids, and then you'll be quite free to go and find her," said she.

The girl rose, but Ravenor sat still. He looked at her so intently that her eyes fell.

"I found her in the hall," he said, "and I brought her here, and for once in my life I shall put cowardice behind me. If ever a man deserved the medal of honor, it's I, for my temples are throbbing like triphammers, and my knees shake so I don't dare stand up. However, this time I intend neither to skulk nor to run—Gertrude—Gertrude—Lord! but I believe I'm going to funk, after all—Gertrude—will you marry me?"

The girl gasped, stepped back, sank into her chair, and there she shook with suppressed laughter.

"I knew it," groaned Ravenor. "I knew it. A coward is always ridiculous."

"But you're not a coward now," she said. "You've proved it by your reckless bravery."

"Much good it does me," he said, bitterly.

She looked at him long and searchingly, and her laughing eyes became grave.

"Anyway, it's won you—oh, the medal of honor," she said softly.

Easily Done.

"How do you get rid of the women suffragists so smoothly?"

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Brute.

With almost girlish pride she displayed the crullers she had cooked for him with her own little hands.

"How do you like them?" she ventured at tea.

"Well," he chuckled, "trying to extract his teeth from one, "it would have been better if you had made them very much larger. Then I could have used them as automobile tires."

HARMLESS BREAKS.

A woman may break
  A man's heart at will,
But it's always good
  For another break still.

An Affinity Shy.

"Yes," confessed the leading man of the barn-storming aggregation, as he led the bunch cityward via the cross-tie route, "I am wedded to my art."

"Well, don't let it worry you," rejoined the soubrette. "You can easily get a divorce on the grounds of incompatibility."

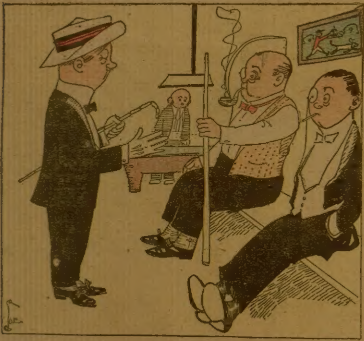
His Mistake.

"Yes," said the drug clerk. "I am called up occasionally to compound prescriptions at night."

"Isn't a man likely to make mistakes working in semi-darkness?"

"You bet he is. I took a plugged quarter once."

ANOTHER METHOD.



Chollie—But a fellow can't always pick the winnah!
Gussie—Then, bah Jove, pick the losahs and bet against them.

Two Celebrations.

Miggles—Congratulate me, old man. I'm preparing to celebrate my wooden wedding next week.

Wiggles—And I am going to celebrate my wouldn't wedding tomorrow. Just five years ago Miss Gotrox said she wouldn't marry me.

Gymnastics.

Taylor—Did the course Baylor took in physical culture make him any stronger?

Naylor—Only in one hand. You know he took a correspondence course.

Overworking the Meter.

Mother—Come, William, quick, Minna has tried to kill herself by inhaling gas!

Father—Good heavens! Think what the gas bill will be this month!

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Tommy to the Rescue.

Remedies are unfortunately sometimes worse than the diseases which they are intended to cure. Tommy's mother had made him a present of a toy shovel and sent him out in the sand lot to play with his baby brother.

"Take care of baby, now," said his mother, "and don't let anything hurt him."

Presently screams of anguish from baby sent the distracted parent flying to the sand lot.

"For goodness' sake, Tommy, what has happened to the baby?" said she, trying to soothe the wailing infant.

"There was a naughty fly biting him on the top of his head, and I killed it with the shovel," was the proud reply.

Rapid Writers.

First Reporter—DeRanter, the actor, tells me he is going to write a book on the stage.

Second Reporter—Well, I don't suppose it will take him more than a day or two.

First Reporter—A day or two?

Second Reporter—Yes; haven't you ever noticed how rapidly actors write on the stage?

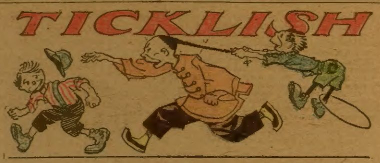
The Little Things.

"I don't want to be nagging at you," Mrs. Marryat began, "but it's the little things that bother me most——"

"Ah!" interrupted her husband, sweetly, "I suppose you're going to tell me you haven't a decent pair of shoes."

MARY AND THE MUTTON.

Mary had a little lamb,
  Which she did quickly store
Away—and then she passed her plate
  And had a little more.



Encouraging the Hen.

A litle girl who had a live bantam presented to her was disappointed at the smallness of the first egg laid by the bird. Her ideal egg was that of the ostrich, a specimen of which was on the table in the drawing-room.

One day the ostrich egg was missing from its accustomed place. It was subsequently found near the spot where the bantam nested, and on it was stuck a piece of paper with the words:

"Something like this, please. Keep on trying."

Ups and Downs.

"When I get excited," said the giddy girl with the fluffy hair, "I just jump up and down."

"You may jump up," rejoined the tall-browed maid from Boston, "but I imagine the law of gravitation must be responsible for the alternating descents."

Why He Declined.

The Boss—Jimmy, wouldn't you like to get off this afternoon and take in the ball-game?

Office Boy—No, sir.

The Boss (in surprise)—Why not?

Office Boy—'Cause there ain't no game this afternoon.

A Grievous Error.

"Yes," remarked the party who seemed to be thinking aloud, "that's where the average man makes a mistake."

"How does he make a mistake?" queried the innocent bystander.

"He keeps his mouth open and his eyes closed," explained the student of human nature.

Cheap Blowing.

Rodrick—Why was the count so anxious to blow the horn when invited on the coaching trip?

Van Albert—Why, that's the only way he could blow himself without spending any money.

Rather Dusty.

The Motorist—But you are a novice. To fully enjoy an automobile ride one should take in the surrounding country.

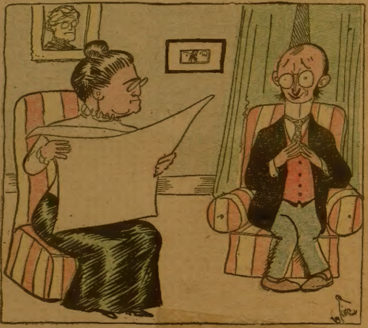
The Friend (caughing)—Don't worry, old man; I am taking in some of the native soil at every breath.

Just Imported.

Eva—Oh, the stories he told me about his castles and villas in Europe were glorious! I am sure he can be nothing short of a baron.

Katherine—Yes, a Baron Munchausen.

TAKING NO CHANCES.



Mrs. Henpeque (reading)—Here's a poor young fellow shot himself just because his best girl refused him.
Mr. Henpeque—Well, he did just right.
Mrs. H—Nonsense. She might have changed her mind.
Mr. H—Exactly.

On the Lawn.

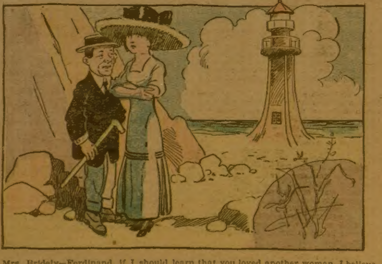
Eva—Two is company and three is a crowd.

Jack—Oh, I don't know. This hammock was strung for three.

Eva—Gracious! Three?

Jack—Yes, Dan Cupid, you and me.

RECKLESS EMPLOYMENT.



Mrs. Bridely—Ferdinand, if I should learn that you loved another woman, I believe it would kill me.
Mr. Bridely—Then why are you always snooping around to get something on me? Trying to commit suicide?

Mathematical Request.

Little Mary, 7 years old, was saying her prayers. "And, God," she petitioned at the close, "make seven times six forty-eight."

"Why, Mary, why did you say that?" asked her mother.

"'Cause that's the way I wrote it in 'zamination in school today, and I want it to be right."

Local Pride.

"What makes you pay for your fare on the train instead of buying a ticket every time you go to Philadelphia?" asked one New Yorker.

"Humph!" replied the other. "You don't suppose I'm going to walk up before that crowd of people at the ticket office and confess that I want to go to Philadelphia!"

Household Remedies

are a blessing to the vast army of people who live in rural districts, and such standard medicines as Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, which has stood the test of time, growing in popularity and favor every year, will continue to be the safeguard of American women for all diseases peculiar to their sex.

Like Father Like Daughter.

Miss Wallstreet—Papa, Mr. Margins proposed to me last evening.

Papa Wallstreet—Well, he's worth a million. Did you accept him?

Miss Wallstreet—Not exactly; but I secured a ten days' option on him.

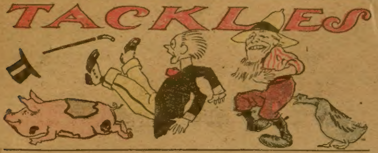
Papa's Opinion.

He—You know that it isn't your money I want to marry you for, don't you, dear?

She—Yes; that's what I told papa.

He—And what did he say?

She—He said if that was true you didn't have as much sense as he thought you had.



ABANDONED IT

For the Old Fashioned Coffee was Killing.

"I always drank coffee with the rest of the family, for it seemed as if there was nothing for breakfast if we did not have it on the table.

"I had been troubled for some time with my heart, which did not feel right. This trouble grew worse steadily.

"Some times it would beat fast and at other times very slowly, so that I would hardly be able to do work for an hour or two after breakfast, and if I walked up a hill it gave me a severe pain.

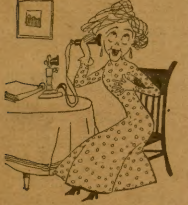
"I had no idea of what the trouble was until a friend suggested that perhaps it might be caused from coffee drinking. I tried leaving off the coffee and began drinking Postum. The change came quickly. I am now glad to say that I am entirely well of the heart trouble and attribute the cure to the leaving off coffee and the use of Postum.

"A number of my friends have abandoned coffee and have taken up with Postum, which they are using steadily. There are some people that make Postum very weak and tasteless, but if it is boiled long enough, according to directions, it is a very delicious beverage. We have never used any of the old fashioned coffee since Postum was first started in our house."

Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs. "There's a Reason."

Ever read the above letter? A new one appears from time to time. They are genuine, true, and full of human interest.

She Was Willing.



Voice at Other End—Hello! Hello! Miss Emily? Will you marry me?

Miss Lastchance—Yes, yes! Who is this, please?

Thrilling.

"Did you ever witness a great struggle with the waves?" asked the man who was always asking queer questions.

"Yes," laughed the pompous man in the green shirt. "I once sat for two long hours while a professional hairdresser struggled with my wife's marcel waves."

To Catch Its Tail.

Mackinson—What are you growling about?

Kelver—I'm growling because I have to work like a dog trying to make both ends meet.

Mackinson—Work like a dog trying to make both ends meet? I thought a dog played when he tried to do that.

Logical.

Green Purchaser (in automobile warerooms)—My friend sent me here to get a rheumatic tire.

Clerk—Rheumatic? You mean pneumatic, don't you?

Green Purchaser—Perhaps it is pneumatic. I thought it was called rheumatic because it's swelled.

Love's Other Helper.

Seymour—Isn't it strange that DeVotes should have married that chatterbox Smith girl?

Ashley—Strange? There's nothing strange about it. The marriage simply proves that love can be deaf as well as blind.

His Two Wishes.

Pendleton—What are the two greatest wishes of a medical student?

Kefer—Give it up. What are they?

Pendleton—To put "Dr." before his own name and "Dr." after the names of other people.

The Literal Man.

Gusher—Hello! How young you're looking! You don't look a day older than you did twenty years ago!

Toucher—It would be strange if I did look a day older when I'm twenty years older.

Heredity.

"Do you believe in heredity?" I asked the pretty manicurist.

"Yes," she replied, as she gently rubbed my thumb half-moon with her orange stick, "my father used to work in a cutnail factory."

Foolish Question.

Mrs. Subbubs (who has hired a man to plant shade trees)—Digging out the holes, I see, Mr. Lannigan.

Lannigan—No, mum. Oi'm diggin' out the dirt an' lavin' the holes.

A Harrowing Choice.

Mother—What is the matter, dearie, that you are crying so?

Heiress—It's all pa's meanness. I want a duke, and I want a new motor car, and he says he can't afford to buy me both.

Down the Old Road.

Jack—Dearest, just one kiss?

Eva—And would you peach on me if I gave you one?

Jack—Of course not. Do you think I would peach on a peach?

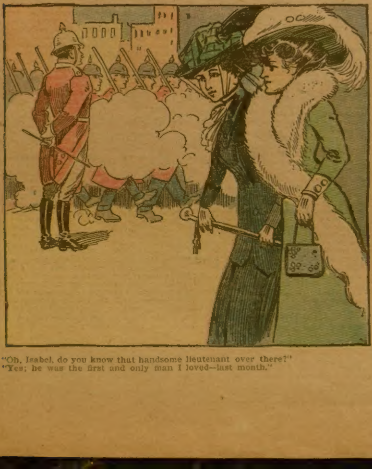
An Armful of Loveliness.

Miss Thynn—I saw Jack put his arm around you.

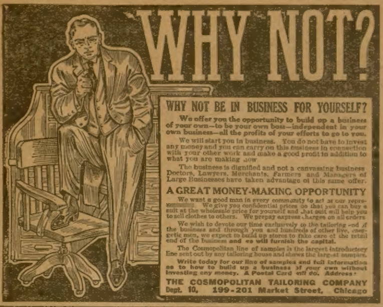
Miss Plump—You didn't either.

Miss Thynn—Well, then, as far around as he could get it.

THE ONLIEST ONE



"Oh, Isabel, do you know that handsome lieutenant over there?"
"Yes; he was the first and only man I loved—last month."



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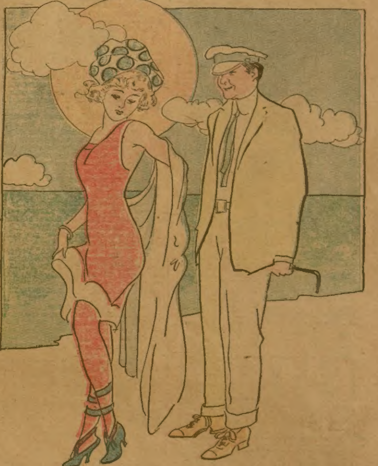
HER WITHERING SCORN.



Hubby—My dear, is it possible you paid $8 for that bathing suit? Why, it doesn't weigh more than about four ounces, and I could hide it in my fist.

Wifey—If I had known that you judge a bathing suit by its size and weight I would have bought a gunny sack.

Joke on the Tackle.

Eva—Here comes the big football tackle who was so popular last year.

Katharine—Indeed! How does he pass the summer?

Eva—Usually fishing.

Katharine—Gracious! Then I suppose you would call him a fishing tackle.

An Unusual Trade.

Old Lady—Why don't you get something to do. Haven't you a trade?

Beggar—Yes'm, but I can't get anything to do at my trade, ma'am.

Old Lady—What is your trade?

Beggar—Blowing nursing bottles for young mosquitoes, ma'am.

In After Years.

They had been married just ten years.

"John, dear," said his wife, "do you remember what happened ten years ago today?"

"You bet I do," answered John. "The license clerk soaked me for $2 and the minister fined me $5 more."

HOW HE WON HER.

Said she, "Through life I'll walk alone,
In sunshine and stormy weather."
But he bought an aeroplane next day—
And now they are flying together.

In Business.

Knox—Shifkins has gone into business for himself.

Blox—So? What line?

Knox—He married a dressmaker.

AS GLORY GOES 'ROUND.

Oh, fame is like a barber's chair,
You wait your turn with patience vexed,
And scarce get placed in comfort there
Ere it's your move. Fate hollers "Next!"

ONLY A SLIGHT CHANGE NEEDED.

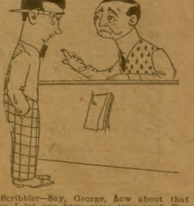
My lady-love is perfect quite,
Her name is Brown, her hair the same.
Her disposition's sweet and bright;
There's naught I'd change—except her
[illegible]

Wisdom of Experience.

Little Willie—Pa, here's something in the paper about a woman giving her word. What is a woman's word?

Pa—The last word, my son.

Truthful.



Scribbler—Say, George, how about that five I let you have some time ago? You said you only wanted it for a short time.

Scratcher—Well, that was the truth. I had it less than a half-hour.

An Airship Mystery;

Or, The Strange Story of Gloria

BY WELDON J. COBB

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CHAPTER XIV.

GONE.

JUST for a single moment did Gloria Chester regard Ruth and Darrell. Every vestige of color had deserted her face. A glance from her eyes awed Darrell—it comprised one vast condemnatory expression of dismay and censure.

Then before Darrell could utter a word Gloria turned from the spot. She seemed to sway unsteadily as she disappeared in the direction of the house. Darrell fancied that he caught the echo of a stifled moan. Then he sat appalled, overwhelmed.

With harrowing conviction two great truths oppressed his mind. Gloria must have heard his last interrupted words to Ruth.

"Forget all that happened that evil night when I first met you in the city?"

What would she think of that, what could she think of it except that he had grossly, brazenly presented himself as a stranger at Rose Cottage?"

Again, she had seen Darrell and Ruth in apparent lover-like communion, seated there on the rustic bench in the white moonlight. Tacitly Gloria had accepted the homage of his love, and now—

His heart was stricken dumb, a cold dread came over him. So far as Gloria Chester was concerned, Clyde Darrell felt that love between them was dead.

Ruth with a faint sigh came shudderingly back to the full realities of life. She drew away from him. In abject misery she again buried her face in her hands.

"Oh, the terrible story you have told me!" she wailed. "I knew Rolfe Tyson was false, but oh, I loved him so! I loved him so!"

"You must forget him," spoke Darrell firmly. "Can you doubt for one moment after what I have told you that this man is a black-hearted villain?"

"If there should be some mistake—" pleaded the distressed girl.

"There can be no mistake," declared Darrell. "Have you not the evidence of your own experience? Miss Chester, I implore you to put this base-hearted schemer out of your thoughts."

He was too sick at soul to put any new fervor into his interest in the affairs of the unfortunate young woman. He saw that Ruth still clung to the memory of the man she loved, false-hearted as she knew him to be. As she somewhat composed herself, she sat staring stoically at the moonlit garden, the intensity of a deep despair in her eyes.

"I thank you for all your kindness and sympathy," spoke Ruth finally, arising to her feet. "I am too wretched to think of it all. I wish I were dead—dead!"

"Courage!" spoke Darrell, but as the young girl left him he realized that his own heart was lacerated and crushed with the terrible complication of unfortuitous occurrences the evening had brought about.

After Ruth had gone into the house and up to her room, Darrell wandered aimlessly about the garden. Mr. Chester was in the library engrossed in his tasks, and Darrell had no heart or interest for the present in the subject of his employment which appertained to the missing fortune.

What was that splendid spoil to the love he had lost that fateful hour, and lost, too, through a misconception he could not, dared not correct!

A light behind the closed blinds in the room occupied by Gloria told that she had not sought the company of her sister since the episode in the summer house. After about an hour Darrell repaired to his own apartment. As he quickly passed down the upper corridor it seemed as though a knife blade had suddenly entered his heart. From behind the door of the room which held Gloria the low sound of weeping met his hearing.

In abject misery Clyde Darrell flung himself on his bed when he reached his room. What wretchedness did fair, peaceful Rose Cottage hold under its roof that calm, lovely summer night! There was Ruth, her life wrecked, her heart broken, Gloria struck down by a conviction that lover and sister were heartless traitors to her peace of mind, old Mr. Chester pursuing what might be a phantom fortune, himself enmeshed in new complications and troubles!

Fate was weaving an intricate net, and enmeshed within it Clyde Darrell seemed helpless to struggle. How he got to sleep he did not know, but at early dawn he was awakened by a startling cry in the corridor outside.

The voice of Gloria rang out, anguished and clear, as she beat at the door of Mr. Chester's room.

"Father! father!" she cried in tones of distress and alarm, "rouse up at once—Ruth has disappeared!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CLEW.

Clyde Darrell was dismayed and startled at the words of Gloria. A keen pang shot through his heart as he realized that some new trouble had come to this devoted family. He hastily prepared to present himself and learn just what had happened.

He heard the door of the room occupied by Mr. Chester open hastily.

"Disappeared!" exclaimed the old man.

"Yes, father," spoke Gloria in a fluttering tone of anxiety and dread, "Ruth is gone."

"Gone—where?"

"Oh, father!" exclaimed Gloria in poignant accents, "she has left us forever. She has left a note—come below quickly, start a search for her, or I fear we will never see her again."

When Darrell came down to the family sitting room he found Mr. Chester and Gloria standing near a table. To it a tiny crumpled note had just fluttered from the nerveless hand of the old man.

It was evident that Mr. Chester had received a great shock. His face was pale, his hands shook and he was aroused out of his usual absorbed interest in the leading theme of his thoughts, the hidden fortune.

What does this all mean?" he murmured in an abstracted way.

"It means that poor Ruth has been laboring under some deep secret trouble ever since she came home," answered Gloria. "She has been ill of mind, father, not of body. I have tried to hide it from you, but I have known all along that Ruth has been dying slowly, surely of a broken heart!"

"I cannot understand it," murmured Chester. "She was such a happy-spirited, light-hearted girl."

"She will tell me nothing of this mystery, of the secret of her misery," went on Gloria in accents of the keenest distress. "Father, do not lose a moment in starting a search for Ruth."

"No, no!" said Chester in a lost, dazed way—"but how can we know where she has gone? The note gives no indication."

"Mr. Chester, let me assist you."

Darrell stepped forward. Gloria gave a violent start. For only a moment did her glance sweep the face of the young man. Indignation, cruel, bitter scorn, suspicion, dislike—a myriad of powerful feminine emotions seemed centered in one swift flash of her eyes. She drew away from him as if his presence was contaminating.

"I think that it is due that you should," she spoke incisively, and swept from the room.

Darrell almost staggered, strong man as he was, at the blow to love and hope the girl had delivered. There could be no doubt that Gloria Chester had set him down as a faithless, treacherous hypocrite, and, deep in the network of complications that circumstances had woven about him, Darrell was forced to be mute.

Mr. Chester stared after Gloria and then at Darrell in a puzzled, startled way. He traced some new baffling element in the manner in which his daughter had addressed his assistant.

"Why what is the matter between you and Gloria?" he began, but Darrell interrupted him hastily with the words:

"Miss Chester is greatly troubled over her sister. If I may read the note and learn how Miss Ruth left the house, and when, and what she took away with her, I may form some theory as to her motive and possible course of flight, for such it is.

"Flight—but why?" queried the old man in considerable agitation, "we all cherished her tenderly. I know of no cause for unhappiness or disatisfaction."

Darrell did not attempt to reply. He read the note. It was the pitiful, heartbroken cry of a despairing soul. Ruth wrote that a secret mystery had crushed her, and that she was going away—far away. She asked her sister to forget her. And to forgive, and recalling that other note he had suppressed from the knowledge of Gloria, the young man feared that the distracted girl was bent on ending all her woes by self-destruction.

Darrell visited her room, where he found the old servant. From what he learned, Ruth had packed a few things in a small satchel and must have stolen quietly from the house after midnight.

Darrell went below again, thinking deeply over the distressful episode of the departure of Ruth. He faced Gloria in the lower hall. She turned aside from him with a dumb show of contempt, or dread, he could not tell which, and his heart sunk in his bosom like lead.

Mr. Chester listened to what he had to say in the library, pacing the room restlessly.

"There is not the faintest clew as to the plans of your daughter," spoke Darrell; "nor as to the direction in which she has gone. I shall start out to search for her at once, Mr. Chester."

"I hope you may find her," sighed the old man. "I trust, too, you may learn the cause of all her strange movements."

Darrell prepared for the possibility of a protracted journey.

"I do not believe that suicide is in her mind," he reflected, "for she has taken a satchel with her. No, despite all she knows and all that I have told her concerning Rolfe Tyson, I believe her love for him is luring her away to seek for him. The conscienceless scoundrel—they must never meet again, or she is lost. Gloria! Gloria!" he continued in a transport of mingled grief and anxiety as he left the grounds at last, "how you are misjudging me, and I dare not speak a word."

Darrell went first to the village. At the end of an hour he was thoroughly convinced that Ruth had not gone to Delamere. His next thought was that she had reached the nearest railroad point, and that he must center his investigation there. Then a stray discovery turned his attention in just the reverse direction.

To the west twenty miles ran another railroad, more direct for the East. Before leaving the vicinity of Rose Cottage, he decided to make a few inquiries down the road leading across the hills. He visited one or two houses, at last coming across a woman whose husband he had aided one night when his barn was on fire. Darrell's guarded inquiries as to the family having seen any members of the Chester family recently caused the woman to start and then say excitedly:

"It is about Miss Ruth, is it not, sir?"

"I am looking for her, yes," acknowledged Darrell.

"Then it's a strange thing happened this morning, sir. Just after midnight I thought I heard some one knocking at the front door. When I got up this morning I found a scarf on the doorsteps. I recognized it at once as belonging to Miss Ruth, for I remember having seen her wear it several times."

The woman brought the article in question to Darrell.

"I should have taken it to Rose Cottage soon as I had my work done up," she continued, "for about an hour ago my nearest neighbor happened over. She said that their new hired man coming home from driving to see a friend was met by an excited, wild-looking young lady he did not know. She offered him money to drive her across the hills to Edendale. He told her the horse was not his and was tired out from a long journey, and she went away."

"West, you think?" inquired Darrell anxiously.

"Yes," nodded the woman.

And west Clyde Darrell turned his face, feeling that he had a clew to fugitive, wandering Ruth Chester at last.

CHAPTER XVI.

A WEARY QUEST.

"You are sure that the young lady left the train here?"

"Positive, sir."

"And she answered to my description?"

"To the smallest detail, mister. Just as you say as to dress, and the same as to her poor pale face and heart-broken look. I felt truly sorry for her, for I've got a daughter about her age of my own at home. Her ticket was for Denver, but she got weaker and weaker, afraid to keep on the train, and decided to stop here. I think she knew some one here, for I heard her make an inquiry of the station agent as to a Mrs. Carlisle."

This conversation took place between Clyde Darrell and the conductor of an eastbound train that had stopped at the little settlement of Lisle, late on the afternoon of the second day following the disappearance of Ruth Chester from Rose Cottage.

The train moved on, leaving Darrell standing alone on the platform of the little station. He was dusty, unshaven, pale and hollow-eyed. For nearly forty-eight hours he had kept up a ceaseless search for the runaway girl.

His discovery at the start that Ruth at midnight had applied to a farmhouse for a man and team to convey her across the country to the west, was only the start of a dozen or more succeeding discoveries, all leading up to the possible course of the fugitive.

Darrell inquired at another farmhouse a little later, to find that here Ruth had succeeded in inducing a farmer boy, just starting for a near market town with a load of vegetables to allow her to accompany him. At this town all trace of the refugee was lost for a time. Later, however, Darrell got in the direct trail again. Ruth had left the town in a livery rig.

It was not until the next morning that Darrell traced the runaway girl to a railroad town. A person answering her description had purchased a ticket to Denver. She, too, had asked the fare from Denver to Chicago. The heart of the searcher sank at this intelligence. In a flash Darrell fancied he discerned the motive of the flight of Ruth, and readily surmised her plans and destination.

"She is trying to find that villain, Rolfe Tyson," decided Darrell. "She cannot overcome her love for the treacherous scoundrel, and has gone to join him."

It seemed very evident that such was the intention of the fugitive girl. She had gone west to throw her friends off her track and evade pursuit. Darrell did not take the first train east. He knew that Ruth had a good start of him, and that he could not hope to overtake her should she continue her journey direct to Chicago. He learned that the same railroad crew would arrive on the next train. Ruth was scarcely in a condition to take a long, rigorous journey. She might have to lay over, he reasoned. The conductor of the train might have learned where she went to in Denver. This thought resulted in a fortuitous discovery. Darrell took the next Denver-bound train, and had a talk with its conductor to find that he remembered the runaway passenger perfectly.

And now, satisfied that Ruth, overcome with weakness had left the train at the little town of Lisle just twenty-four hours previously, and hoping she had not resumed her broken journey in the interval, Darrell sank to a bench to rest and think for a moment before resuming his quest for the sister of the woman he loved.

He nodded almost before he knew it, for he was greatly worn out. His active anxiety would not admit of any permanent mental lethargy, however. Soon, refreshed by even a slight nap, he was on his feet and crossed from the depot to a little restaurant. He was faint from his abstinence from food, and he felt like a new man when he left the restaurant, inquiring first as to the residence of Mrs. Carlisle.

Everybody knew her, and Darrell had no trouble in locating her home, a pretty rustic cottage near the limits of the village. He found her to be a patient-faced matron, who regarded him inquisitively as he stated that he had some particular business with her.

"Come in," she said hospitably, "although I cannot remember having seen you before."

"That is true," admitted Darrell, as he seated himself at the lady's request in the best room of the house. "I will be very brief and plain with you, Mrs. Carlisle. I have come to inquire concerning Miss Ruth Chester."

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"Why—why do you come to me?" she asked stammeringly.

"I pray you, do not try to seek evasion or hide anything from me," said Darrell with grave earnestness. "My mission is a vital one. I have been sent by her distressed relations, her father and her sister, to seek a trace of her. She is ill, scarcely in a condition to care for herself, and—I must find her."

Mrs. Carlisle looked down as if thinking deeply. Her face was very grave. At length she looked up with the words:

"Yes, Ruth has been here."

"I was told that," announced Darrell.

"But she is not here now," added the lady.

Darrell could not repress an exclamation of disappointment and concern.

"Do you know where she is?" he inquired.

"Yes," came the reply, though reluctantly given. "I will say that, but I dare say no further."

"Madam," spoke Darrell firmly, "you must. I will say to you that I am her friend, her confidant, in a measure. I do not know how much she has told you, but never did a heart-broken child need the care and encouragement of her friends as she does now."

"I realize that, but I promised her, I promised her," murmured the woman in apparent mental distress. "Let me tell you this much. She came to me, because two years ago when she was on a summer vacation near here she was the dearest friend of my poor dear daughter. When my Nellie died she was with her. I never knew her family, but my heart went out to her like an own mother when she told me who she was. Poor Ruth, she made me promise not to advise her friends of her whereabouts. She said she only wanted to rest for a day or two until she regained her strength to continue her journey. She stayed here restlessly last night. This morning she was weaker than when she came. She was excited, and seemed to be possessed with a morbid dread that some of her friends would discover her. It was then that I told her of my sister, Jane Bond, who lives twenty miles away from here and away from the railroad. I advised her to go there, where it was quiet and secluded, and rest until her health was restored. She sighed, reflected and wept. Then she seemed to form a decision. She wrote a long letter and asked me to mail it. I did so. Then I arranged with a man named Jackson, an odd-jobs fellow about the village, to take her to my sister's house. They left this morning. He has not yet returned. I tell you all this, relying upon your honor that you will not reveal her whereabouts to her friends without her permission."

"I will not act in the matter until I have seen Miss Ruth," agreed Darrell.

Mrs. Carlisle then gave explicit directions as to the location of the home of her sister, Jane Bond, and Darrell left the house.

"One moment," he spoke, at the lowermost step of the porch—"the letter you mailed—"

[illegible]

"[illegible] notice the directions?"

"I did, sir."

"Who was it for?"

"A Mr. Rolfe Tyson."

"And the city?"

"Chicago."

CHAPTER XVII.
JACKSON, THE TRAMP.

Darrell felt certain after the disclosures of Mrs. Carlisle that he was destined to find the runaway girl. He was saddened with the reflection, however, that Ruth's flight had been actuated solely by her blind, despairing love for an unworthy object.

Around the miscreant, Rolfe Tyson, her life had been centered. Now, knowing him to be false and treacherous, still she would not forget him.

"She has found herself too weak to travel in quest of the recreant," decided Darrell, "and she has written for him to come to her. She will be safe in her retirement with Mrs. Bond until I can reach her."

Darrell was sorely in need of rest. He took a room at the village hotel, and it was not until the next day that he started for Greylands, as the place was named where the sister of Mrs. Carlisle lived. He started on foot on his journey early in the morning.

It was about ten o'clock when he sat down on a log by the roadside to rest, fairly in sight of the Bond home. He wondered how Ruth would receive him. She seemed to have abandoned home and friends for the sake of the man she loved, and might resent any interference or counsel on his part.

Finally, as he approached the house he noticed a man in its stable yard hitching a horse to a light buggy. Darrell believed this to be the person to whom Mr. Carlisle had alluded as Jackson.

"She is there—I see her," spoke Darrell suddenly, as he caught the flutter of the white sleeve of a dress at the window. As he approached nearer he made out the missing girl. She lay upon a sofa against the open window, so close to it that Darrell could look down into her face, not two feet away.

Ruth seemed half slumbering. No one else was in the room. He leaned beyond a climbing vine that nearly shuttered the window.

"Miss Chester—Ruth," he spoke in a guarded tone.

Her eyes opened with startling quickness. The intense pallor of her already bloodless face intensified, her lips parted in a mute terror.

"Do not let me startle you," continued Darrell reassuringly. "I have had a long quest and difficult time in finding you."

"Oh, why, have you sought me out?" quavered Ruth.

She was trembling all over as she sat up, swaying to and fro. Then she fell to one side, uttered the faint cry of a swooning woman, and lay a lifeless clod upon the floor of the room.

Darrell, outside the room, could not, of course, assist her, but he saw a woman hurry to her assistance from an adjoining apartment. Just then the man in the buggy drove out from the stable yard. He nodded and grinned as Darrell looked after him.

"Hello, Mr. Darrell," he said.

The newcomer was surprised at the recognition, and advanced towards the buggy. Its driver was a dissolute, rough-looking man, suggesting the conventional village ne'er-do-well, or tramp.

"[illegible] you know me, I guess," [illegible] but I know you [illegible] at Rose Cottage with the Chesters. [illegible] work there about a month ago."

"Yes, I dimly remember you," replied Darrell.

"I drove a young lady over here from Lisle yesterday," continued the man named Jackson. "Horse got lamed, and had to stop over. I say, the gal in there is one of Chester's daughter's, isn't she?"

"Yes, it is a Miss Chester," said Darrell tersely. "She has been ill and was on a journey, and is resting here with a friend."

"Come, now!" whirled out Jackson with a shy chuckle and a wink—"you're here, too. Oh, I'm mum, but if it's an elopement, you've got a pretty wife, just the same."

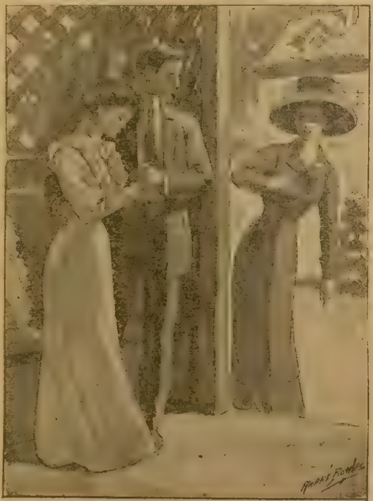
"My man," said Darrell sternly, "don't let such an idea enter your mind. The poor young lady is ill, as I tell you. I am here to look after her at the request of her relatives. I hope you will not impart a wrong impression to the gossipers, or indeed say anything about her being here."

"All right, Mr. Darrell," assented the man indifferently.

"And, by the way, you can do an errand for me."

"All right."

Darrell took out an envelope and paper and addressed a brief message to Mr. Chester, telling him where he was and how he had found Ruth, and asking him to come on at once. This he folded and sealed in the envelope, taking a two dollar bill from his pocket book, and handed both to Jackson.



Just for a single moment did Gloria Chester regard Ruth.

"I want you to give that message to the telegraph agent at Lisle, when you get there," he directed. "It will cost less than a dollar—you may keep the change for your trouble."

"Thanks, you're a gentleman, Mr. Darrell," declared Jackson, driving off.

Darrell sighed drearily as he went on to the porch in the front of the house and sat down upon its steps. He had a hard proposition to handle. Ruth was aware of his presence here, and would resent it as interfering with her plans. He had no legal power to restrain her, and she might at once leave the place and try to resume her journey.

"One thing my duty is plain," he told himself, after a long period of thought—"I must guard this poor girl till her father overtakes her."

Darrell planned that the telegram would reach Mr. Chester before nightfall. With due diligence he might arrive the next morning.

Alas for his seeming natural and coherent anticipations!—Jackson, the ne'er-do-well, the rambler, was a totally irresponsible person. The money that Darrell had given him burned a hole in his pocket till he reached a road house about five miles out of Lisle.

Here he halted and proceeded to consume all the bad liquor he could hold. In an hour he had neither sense nor reason left. When he resumed his drive the horse ran away, wrecked the buggy and tore into town without it. Jackson feared the consequence, and sneaked away to the next town on the railroad, in the meantime losing the sealed telegram that Darrell had entrusted to his charge.

Then he proceeded to indulge once more in liquor. He dared not go back to Lisle, and a wild idea came into his mind. He would go to Rose Cottage—he knew how to steal his way on a passing freight train. He could carry a sensational story to Mr. Chester, and might be paid well for his information.

At all events Lisle was no place for him, and a change of scene pleased his fancy.

It was about noon the next day when Gloria, seated in the front room of the cottage, heard a stranger accost her father, who was on the porch.

"Don't think you know me, Mr. Chester," spoke the begrimed and befuddled Jackson, for it was he, "but I worked here once, and I've come a long way to bring you word about your daughter Ruth. She's run [illegible] isn't she?"

"[illegible]" [illegible]ried the dis[illegible] rising to his feet in [illegible] alive?"

"[illegible]" assured Jack[illegible] together, a[illegible]yond."

"Together!"

"Yes."

"What do you mean[illegible]"

"Elope[illegible]" [illegible]kled Jackson.

There was [illegible] sob from the room within. [illegible] had crushed the h[illegible] Gloria, and she sank down in a deadly [illegible]n.

CHAPTER XVII.
FOR GLORIA'S SAKE

"Go away and leave me to di[illegible]"

With these pathetic, desp[illegible] ringing in his ears, Clyde Darrell pa[illegible] and down the shaded country road n[illegible] new refuge of Ruth Chester.

One day—two days! he ever and anon looked down the verdured vista in the direction of Lisle, wondering why no response had come to his telegram.

His position was an anxious and peculiar one. After he had given Jackson the message for the telegram, he made his presence known to Jane Bond.

Darrell recited his interest in Ruth Chester, and told the good woman of his acquaintanceship with Mrs. Carlisle at Lisle. It took him a long time and a good deal of explaining to influence Miss Bond to his wishes—to arrange for an interview with the runaway girl.

Ruth had been taken upstairs to her room by Miss Bond after her fainting spell. It was not until the next morning that Darrell was able to see her in the sitting room of the house.

His heart beat with tender pity and sorrow as he noted how wan and weak she was. Ruth looked years older than on the occasion when Darrell had first met her. She expressed no resentment or defiance at his appearance. A dull, settled despair was all that her tired eyes and hopeless manner expressed.

Darrell told her what he knew. He implored her to forget Rolfe Tyson. Again he went over the wicked wiles of the treacherous actor. Ruth listened with downcast eyes. She would not discuss the situation with him. She only murmured in broken, poignant tones:

"I cannot forget him—I must see him once more, if only for a moment, to throw myself at his feet and die of a broken heart."

Darrell tried to reason with the distracted girl. He attempted to revive in her the old love for her father and sister. Ruth wept, but at the end said pleadingly:

"Go away and leave me to die."

Darrell did not tell Ruth that he had sent for her friends. His duty was now plain—to keep the girl in sight until Mr. Chester and Gloria had arrived. He had a long conversation with Miss Bond, and narrated to her the necessity of watching Ruth closely so she could not steal away and evade them. He could not, however, explain to her all the circumstances of the case, and the anxious old maid was greatly puzzled and perturbed over the strange commotion that had come into her usually placid life.

Darrell got his meals in the house. He had slept nights on a bench in the garden in full sight of the room which Ruth occupied. That evening, taking his usual stroll down the road, anxious and impatient as to the protracted delay of the Chesters, he was startled to hear his name called out in excited tones.

"Oh, Mr. Darrell!"

Jane Bond, bareheaded and with agitated gestures was running down the road after him from the direction of the house

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Darrell turned quickly, tracing in her excitement some unusual happening.

"She has gone!" panted the woman breathlessly.

"You mean Miss Chester?" exclaimed Darrell in quick alarm.

"Yes, and she may have been gone for hours. I shall never forgive my carelessness, after all you told me of how important it was that I should not lose sight of her."

"When did she go—how did she escape your vigilance?" he inquired.

"I was worn out with watching her, and fell asleep. That was as much as five hours ago. She must have gone through the next room while I was asleep. What shall we do?"

Darrell decided quickly. Ruth would not go back towards Lisle, he was certain. He had been more or less in direct view of the road leading to Lisle most of the afternoon, and she had not passed that way. He decided on pursuit down the west road. An inquiry or two encouraged him. Several people had noticed a young girl along the road several hours previous.

At nightfall Darrell came up with the fugitive. The strength of the refugee had given out near a cross-roads tavern, and there she had taken refuge. It was a lonely place, depending on passing patronage for its support, and conducted by a widow and two young sons.

Darrell did not inform the hostess that he knew her guest, but through some politic questioning learned all that he wished to know. Ruth had tottered into the place, so weak and ill that one faint had followed after another. The woman had carried her to a comfortable room, and had sent for a doctor who lived about two miles away. The physician had pronounced his patient in a condition of complete collapse.

"He said she must have perfect rest," narrated the woman, "and that she was in a serious condition. He left some medicine, and will be here again in the morning."

Darrell made arrangements to stay at the inn. When he arose the next morning, the landlady informed him that her guest had passed the night moaning restlessly in a fever of pain and delirium. An hour later the physician arrived. Darrell followed him out of the place later.

He determined to make a confidant to a degree of the physician, and the latter told him in detail of the condition of his patient.

"She will recover during the day from her fever," he said, "but she will at once relapse if she attempts to get about. Her only hope of permanent recovery is to rest quietly for some days. She seems under some great secret mental stress or anxiety, and it is wearing her vitality away."

When the physician had again seen Ruth Chester that evening, he told Darrell that she was somewhat improved in her general condition. She was nervous and excitable, however, he said, and seemed determined to leave the place, and had asked the doctor to give her some powerful stimulant that would give her the strength to make a long journey, which she told him involved a matter of life and death.

"I put her off until tomorrow," the doctor explained, "but it will certainly be a matter of death if the young lady subjects herself to any unusual exertion. Her heart is weak, and her condition practically dangerous."

Darrell decided to send a message to Jane Bond the next day, apprising her of the whereabouts of Ruth. He felt sure that by this time her father or Gloria had come on in response to his telegram. When the next morning arrived, however, he was confronted with a new problem that occupied all his thoughts and time.

The landlady came to him in an excited flutter to announce that her guest had come down to the inn parlor dressed and prepared for a journey.

"She has insisted on paying her bill," the woman said, "and has asked me to get a conveyance to take her to the nearest railroad town."

"It must not be," observed Darrell determinedly. "I must see the young lady at once."

He entered the little parlor of the inn, closing the door after him. Ruth, more wretched-looking than ever, sat at a table, her face buried in her hands. He approached and spoke her name gently.

At first startled and surprised, it seemed that Ruth would become hysterical or faint away, but the loyal, earnest manner of Darrell impressed her. She cried softly as he went over all her sad case. He depicted the worthlessness of Rolfe Tyson, the deep love and anxiety of her father and sister, his own friendly feeling towards her. He implored her to forget her unhappiness and return with him to Rose Cottage.

"I cannot—I cannot!" cried Ruth in poignant distress. "Oh, Mr. Darrell, you have, indeed, been a friend to me, but I cannot face Gloria and father. I cannot battle the lure of love, hopeless though it be, that impels me to seek the man who has so cruelly deceived me. What will they think? All these days I have been away from them. And you, oh, my noble friend, you have spent sleepless hours trying to aid a despairing, heart-broken girl. I will never explain to father or Gloria, I will never go home again."

"You must," spoke Darrell. Of a sudden a great resolve, the thought of a mighty sacrifice that would solve the cruel situation had flashed into his mind. For Gloria's sake—anything! His heart chilled, yet thrilled at the heroic impulse that actuated it.

And then he spoke. The world would judge harshly, sure enough, should he and Ruth return to Rose Cottage. Would Gloria misunderstand, as well?

"Let me guard your poor dear life," he spoke eloquently. "Forget Rolfe Tyson—become my wife."

"Your wife!" repeated Ruth in stupefied amazement.

"Yes, it will close the lips of clamor, it will irrevocably place a barrier between you and Rolfe Tyson. My wife in name only—I will disappear when you are safe back home. For your own sake, for Gloria's sake—it is the only solution of this strange situation."

The revelation came to the stricken girl like a shock.

"Your wife?" she murmured vaguely, and over and over again incoherently, "a barrier to close the lips of clamor!"—and fainted dead away.

"For Gloria's sake—to save that dear heart one pang of misery! My life, my future, my love's broken dream—for Gloria's sake!" murmured the man with the great soul of a hero.

The continuation of this most extraordinary story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. It leads to very strange and fascinating situations. Read it. If you are not a regular subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year.

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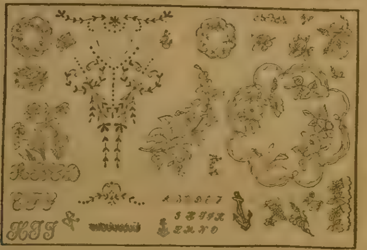

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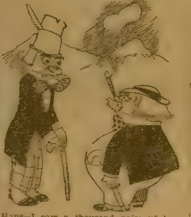

Hans—I saw a thousand pairs uf loons in Lincoln Park der udder day.

Louey—Loons? Vot kind uf loons?

Hans—Pantaloons.

The Bishop and the Infidel.

A good story is told of the witty Bishop Wilmer, of Alabama, who was, it seems, as ready with retort in his youth as in later years. He had but a little while been in charge of his first parish in Goochland County, Virginia, when he was one of a company at dinner, which included several of the gentlemen of the neighborhood. Among them was a man noted for infidelity as to Christianity, and for the rudeness of his manner and speech to those by whom it was professed.

The young parson soon discovered that the old infidel was talking at him, and prudently made no reply. At last the enemy became more aggressive, and addressing him directly, said:

"Mr. Wilmer, you don't seem inclined to talk about religion."

"Yes, sir," he replied. "I do like to talk about it with people who are earnest and respectful in their treatment of it.

"Well," rejoined the assailant, "if you will answer me one question I will let you off."

"Sir," said Mr. Wilmer, "I do not know that I care to be let off from anything; but ask me the question, and if it is a proper question, and I know the answer, I will give it to you."

Well, sir, I've asked all the preachers I have ever seen, and none of them could tell me; and now I ask you—what became of the body of Moses when the devil and the archangel had a contest over it?"

It was a trying question for a young theologian, and a trying occasion, for the assembled company all silently awaited his reply. He quickly arose from his chair, walked across the room, stood directly in front of his antagonist, and said firmly and respectfully:

"Sir, that question does not concern you in the least."

"Why not, sir?"

"Because it is perfectly certain that no archangel will have any contest with the devil over your body."

The infidel confessed himself whipped, and, joining in the loud laugh at his expense, said that he was the only person who had effectively floored him.

Naive.

According to a Washington official, whose public business occasionally takes him to the mountains of Tennessee, the inhabitants of those parts evince a naivete that is at times disconcerting to the stranger's amour propre.

This official had one day stopped at a mountain retreat for a few minutes to change horses.

"Purty fair lookin' hoss you've been ridin'," observed the not uncomely young woman who had met the traveler at the door.

"Yes, purty fair."

"Purty fair lookin' yourself," was the next observation delivered in a cool level tone.

"Thanks," said the official, slightly blushing.

"Air you married?" asked the young woman.

"No, I'm a bachelor."

"Well, I reckon you're 'bout as [illegible] that way, an' mebbe a little better. [illegible] married myself."

Charmed by this show of confidence, the official observed that perhaps his own condition would have been better had he married some good, sensible girl years before. "I'm sure," he added, "that I should have been a happier man."

The young woman smiled reflectively. "Mebbe," she concluded; "but how [illegible] the girl be feelin' by now?"

Be a Singer.

"I am too busy," most men will answer. But why let business interfere with the cultivation of your voice?

No less an authority than Miss Mary Garden has intimated that virtuosity in singing is not so much a matter of natural gift as of unrelenting practice. "Anybody who can carry a tune," says Miss Garden, "can, with practice, become a great singer."

You can give two hours a day to practice singing; of course you can. Sing while taking your morning bath; the acoustics of a bathtub are perfect. Sing while shaving, being careful to avoid the coloratura arias while passing over the area of swift changes about the adam's apple. Sing at breakfast; it will brighten the morning for your wife and will give her a chance to read the paper before you carry it away with you. Sing on your way to the office if you ride downtown in an automobile. They are making sound proof limousines this summer. Sing, if you get a chance, during your work; it has a double advantage; it not only exercises your voice, but it prevents those near you from working. The result is inevitable. They can't work, you can. You get their jobs. It is absurdly simple.

Any man, if he improves his leisure, can become an able singer. Try, and let us hear of your success. For the best "experience," not over 200 words in length, we offer a ticket admitting bearer to the Singer building.

Refused to Be Fooled.

The Frisco's city passenger and ticket agent is Mark Anthony. The freight agent at the terminal station is George Washington. Napoleon Bonaparte Hoskins is the Frisco's soliciting agent.

One afternoon a sun-burned honest looking man, who probably is an upstate planter came into the ticket office opposite the St. Charles hotel, and questioned Anthony about some household goods that were overdue, exhibiting Napoleon Hoskins' card as the man he had given the business to.

"You don't want this office," the city ticket agent told him. "Go down to the terminal station at Basin and St. Louis streets and ask for George Washington."

"George Washington!" said the honest shipper in surprise. "Well, who shall I say sent me?"

"Why Mark Anthony," said the ticket agent.

The planter fixed Anthony with his eye for a minute or two, and then, turning on his heel, tore up Hoskins' card and threw it on the floor. "Young man," he called out as he reached the door, "you needn't try to string me. You N'Orleans people are too fresh to do business with me, anyhow."

"Caesar," called out Anthony to the porter, "sweep out the gentleman's card." And Caesar did.

Courtship and Marriage.

Courtship is a highly inflammable by-product of love; another even more dangerous distillation being marriage. Courtship is the beautiful period of supposed safety just before the explosion. Marriage is the blackened, burned and charred remains after the holocaust.

Courtship is to a woman a more or less lengthy period of moonlight, hammocks, diamonds, dinners, dances, theaters, flowers and fine candy in five pound boxes. Realizing that this cannot go on forever, no matter how much of a good thing he may be, she veers it around to marriage just before it begins to wane.

The same period to a man means constant uneasiness as to her constancy, sleepless nights, undue extravagance with her, the practice of personal economies and a general appearance of asininity.

As soon as the marriage has been accomplished both breathe sighs of relief and begin to see things—said things being made up of defects hitherto kept carefully guarded, such as snoring, temper, physical imperfections, laziness, selfishness, etc.

The long courtship is pitiful; it is the hope deferred that makes the heart sick. A short courtship is equally pitiful if it be a case of elope preferred, for it will make the heart still sicker.—Life.

The Sandbag for Invalids.

Many persons are acquainted with the virtues of the hot-water bag, but the sandbag is still better. Get some clean, fine sand, dry it thoroughly in a kettle on the stove; of flannel make a bag about eight inches square, fill it with the dry sand, sew the opening carefully together, and cover the bag with cotton or linen cloth. This will prevent the sand from sifting out, and also enable you to heat the bag quickly by placing it in the oven or on top of the stove. After once using this you will never again try to warm the feet or hands of a sick person with a heated iron or a brick. The sand holds the heat for a long time, and the bag can be tucked up to the back without inconveniencing the invalid.

* * *

Use the knowledge you have, then go after more.

BOY'S
AND
GIRL'S
CORNER

THE BOY WITH MUSCLE;

Or, A 3,000-Mile Motor-Car Race

By STEPHEN ANGUS COX

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CHAPTER XIX.
CHASED BY APACHES!

"SAY, they can pepper us with Winchesters, if they take the notion!" said Gerald, turning slightly pale.

"Yes; the guns will shoot plenty far enough; but the difficulty will be for the redskins to shoot straight enough to hit us, while riding on horseback at such a pace."

"Well, but if they shoot often enough, they will hit us, even though firing at random—unless we get out of range."

"Can we do that?"

"If we were on a good road, we could; but this is an untracked desert, you see."

"Yes, but it seems to be smooth and level."

"It has been all right, so far; but we don't know at what moment we may run into a gully, ravine or buffalo wallow and go to smash."

"That's true; but we can keep a lookout ahead, you know."

Crack!

A bullet from a Winchester whistled past Gerald's head, causing him to duck and utter an exclamation.

"Great Guns!" he cried. "Say, that was as close as I want any bullet to come!"

"It was a chance shot, without doubt," said Sandy. "I don't believe the fellow that fired it could come that close again in a hundred trials."

"Perhaps not; but I don't want him to make that many trials."

Crack! Crack!

Two more of the redskins had fired, but they missed so far that the youths did not hear the whistle of the bullets.

"We must get out of range!" cried Gerald. "To speed up will be taking chances of smashing the bubble, but it is better to do that than to plod along and let them fill us up with lead."

"That's so."

Crack, crack, crack!

The youths heard the whistle of another bullet, and Gerald did not hesitate any longer, but increased his speed, and the automobile went bounding and swaying along across the desert.

Crack, crack, crack, crack.

The Apaches had noted the increase of speed, undoubtedly, and now they fired a number of shots and sent up a series of whoops and yells that were sufficient to curdle the blood in one's veins.

Crack, crack!

Crack, crack, crack, crack!

The bullets whistled around, and two or three thudded in the rear of the automobile.

"Say, we had better get down on our knees and have the back of the seat as a protection from the bullets," said Sandy.

"But, I can't see how to steer, then," objected Gerald.

"You will have to steer in a generally straight course, and can pop up occasionally and take an observation, Gerald."

"That's so. Down with you, old fellow."

They got down on their knees, and were thus sheltered by the seat.

It was lucky they did so, for another shower of bullets came their way and thudded in the rear of the motor car, and at least two hit the back of the seat, while several whistled above it.

"I believe they'd have got us, that time!" said Gerald.

"I shouldn't wonder," replied Sandy.

"Say, this is fierce, isn't it?"

"It certainly is!"

"Who would have thought that we would have had to race for our lives from redskins, in making a trip like this!"

"I never thought of such a thing."

"Nor did I."

Gerald popped up, now, like a jack-in-the-box, and took a quick survey ahead, and then dropped down again. None too quickly, either, for there came a series of reports, and again the bullets whistled and thudded all around.

On dashed the automobile, swaying, pounding, bumping.

Sandy popped up and took a look ahead, and then dropped down again.

"Coast clear," he said.

"Good!"

The Apaches kept up a fierce whooping and yelling, and fired volley after volley, but the youths had so far escaped injury.

Just after a shower of bullets had whistled past, Sandy popped up, half-turned and looked back. Then he dropped down again.

"We are leaving them pretty fast, Gerald," he said.

"Is that so?"

"Yes; they must be three-quarters of a mile away."

"Good! I hope we'll succeed in getting out of range pretty soon."

"I hope so."

"I don't like this this way of running a bubble. I am not used to the blindfold style of driving."

"Especially in a strange region, eh?"

"That's right; and in an unbroken desert."

He popped his head up and took a look ahead, and dropped down again.

"It seems to be all clear, ahead," he said. "But I shall not be surprised if we shoot off into a deep gully or something at any moment."

"We'll hope that nothing of the kind occurs," said Sandy.

"So we will."

Crack, crack, crack, crack, crack!

Another shower of bullets from the pursuing Apaches.

The shots did not sound so loud, now, and Sandy popped up and took a look back.

When he dropped back, he said, with some satisfaction:

"They are at least a mile behind."

"In that case, I think we shall soon be beyond reach of their bullets," said Gerald.

"Yes, unless, as you say, we run into a gully or something and are brought up short."

Gerald popped up his head and took a look ahead.

A wild cry escaped his lips.

Dropping back on the seat, he gave the steering-wheel a whirl and the car made a sharp turn and dashed almost at right angles.

Sandy was thrown over against the side of the car with considerable violence, and Gerald had to hang onto the wheel to keep from being upset.

"What's the matter?" asked Sandy, as soon as he had recovered his breath.

"Look out, on your side," was the reply.

Sandy did so, and an involuntary exclamation of horror escaped his lips.

The automobile was running along within ten feet of the bank of a gully or ravine which seemed to be forty or fifty feet deep, though not more than thirty feet wide.

"I saw it just in time!" gasped Gerald, his face pale.

"That's right!" agreed Sanday.

"I wonder if we will find an end to the thing?"

"If we don't, it will be bad, Gerald."

"You mean——"

"That the Apaches will be able to head us off!"

"I see. Well, we will keep going and hope for the best."

The Apaches had discovered what the matter was, and had changed their course, so as to head the automobile off.

Suddenly Sandy gave utterance to a cry of delight.

"There's the end of the gully!" he exclaimed.

Sure enough it came to an end a hundred yards further on, and as soon as the point was reached, Gerald turned and started westward again.

The Apaches brandished their weapons, and their yells of rage and disappointment came faintly to the ears of the fugitives.

"They are disappointed," said Sandy.

"Yes; I guess they thought they had us."

"Likely."

"We may get away from them, after all."

"I hope so."

Gerald kept on going at a lively pace, and the automobile leaped and bounded like a thing of life.

The Apaches were left farther and farther in the rear, however, and that was the main thing, just at present.

Gerald kept a sharp lookout ahead, for the narrow escape they had had from running into the gully and going to smash had given him a scare that would stay with him a long while.

Sandy, too, kept his eyes open, and they felt that, between them, they would be able to see another gully in time to avoid it, in case any was found.

They topped a rise, and as they did so, they caught sight of an automobile about a mile ahead.

"Great Guns! yonder are Tully and Seldon!" exclaimed Gerald.

"I believe you are right," agreed Sandy.

"Yes, I'd know that machine anywhere."

CHAPTER XX.
THE RIVAL RACERS.

"I'm glad that we have made up that distance they gained on us," said Sandy.

"So am I."

"I guess we can thank the Indians for that."

"Yes, but won't be in any hurry to thank them."

"No, we don't want to get that close," smiled Sandy.

"You're right, we don't!"

Gerald added to the speed a little, and slowly but surely they drew nearer the other motor car.

"We'll use them for pace-makers," chuckled Gerald.

"That's right," nodded Sandy. "That will make it easier for us."

"Yes; they are the pioneers, and all we have to do is to follow in their tracks."

"And if they bump into any trouble, we will be able to avoid it, thus profiting by their experience."

"True."

Gerald increased the speed still more, and the distance gradually decreased between the automobiles.

Three-quarters of a mile, and then only half a mile was between them, and still Gerald's car gained.

It was evident that Tully and Seldon knew their rivals were coming, for they glanced back occasionally.

Closer and closer drew Gerald's machine to that of Tully, and at last less than fifty yards separated them.

Tully looked back, and Gerald called out:

"How are you, Tully?"

"All right," was the reply. "How are you?"

"Fine! Say, did you see the Indians?"

"Indians? No!"

"We have just been chased by a band of Apaches!"

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, and they're still coming, I guess."

Tully kept turning his head to watch the steering, and now he changed seats with Seldon, who steered, and then Tully could converse with Gerald all right.

He made eager inquiries regarding the Indians, and Gerald told about the race that he and Sandy had had with the redskins.

Just as he finished the story, Sandy exclaimed:

"Yonder the Indians come! They are just topping the ridge!"

Tully and Seldon looked back and caught sight of the Indians, and gave utterance to exclamations.

"Say, we can outrun them, can't we?" Tully asked.

"Yes," replied Gerald. "They were within half a mile of us, once, but we got away from them."

"Say, are those rifles that they have in their hands?"

"Yes—Winchesters."

"Was it the redskins that we heard shooting a while ago?"

"It must have been. They peppered us good and hard, for a long time."

"How far will those Winchesters shoot, anyway?" in an uneasy voice.

"I'm sure I don't know. But I don't think they can do us any damage at the distance they are from us now. They must be a mile away, at least."

Just then the Indians came to a stop. They brandished their weapons, and were likely yelling, though their voices could not be heard.

"I guess they are going to give up the chase," said Sandy.

"I hope so!" said Tully, a note of relief in his voice.

The redskins presently turned and rode back over the brow of the hill and disappeared.

"They have gone back," said Sandy.

"Good!" said Gerald.

He ran his automobile still closer to that of Tully, and they talked back and forth with perfect ease, the machines having been brought down to a bit more moderate rate of speed.

"Where are you heading for?" asked Tully, presently.

"Phoenix."

"I guess we will go the northern route, by way of Flagstaff, keeping along the line of the Santa Fe Railroad."

They continued onward in company till evening, and stopped and ate supper together. They rested half an hour, and then began getting ready to continue their trip.

"I guess we will part company here," said Tully. "Our course will be nearly due west, while yours will be southwest."

"Yes," agreed Gerald. Then they got into their automobiles, exchanged good-bys, and rolled away in divergent directions.

They were soon out of sight of each other, and then Sandy said:

"I wonder if we will meet again before reaching our journey's end?"

"I don't know. I doubt it, though, if Tully goes the way he says he is going."

"Do you think he intends to go in some other direction than what he told us?"

"He may intend to do so. You can't believe everything he says."

"I guess you are right."

They rolled onward till midnight, and then they stopped and went into camp.

They spread their blankets on the ground and lay down and were soon asleep.

When morning came, Sandy was the first to awaken, and as he stirred, he heard a peculiar metallic whirring sound neas his feet. He lifted his head and glanced down, and saw a large rattlesnake coiled on the end of the blanket, near his feet.

Sandy gave a sudden, fierce kick and sent the snake flying, and leaped to his feet, at the same time crying out:

"Up, Gerald! Get up, quick!"

Gerald woke and rose to a sitting posture.

"What is it?" he asked, rubbing his eyes.

"A rattlesnake! Get up, quick!"

Gerald scrambled to his feet quickly, and just as he did so, Sandy found a stone and threw it at the snake, but missed. The rattler, judging it best to retreat, uncoiled and moved swiftly away across the sand, disappearing in the sage brush not far away.

"Say, I wonder if that thing slept with us all night?" half-gasped Sandy. "It was lying on the end of my blanket when I first saw it."

"It may have ben there a long time," shuddered Gerald. "Ugh!"

"Well, we escaped without being bitten, anyway," said Sandy, with an air of relief.

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"Yes, but we might have been bitten!"

They ate some cold food, and then got into the automobile and set out toward the southwest.

About the middle of the afternoon of the next day they rolled into Phoenix, and as they reached the main part of the town, they caught sight of a large automobile standing in front of a hotel.

"It's Tully's car!" exclaimed Gerald. "I'd know it among a thousand!"

"I suspected that he intended to come this way!" said Sandy.

"Well, I am not greatly surprised to find that he told a falsehood," said Gerald.

They brought their car to a stop just behind that of Tully, and as they did so, Tully and Seldon emerged from the hotel.

They started, and looked somewhat disconcerted when they saw Gerald and Sandy, but Tully quickly recovered his assurance and nodded and waved his hand, at the same time saying:

"Hello, Hotchkiss and Hardin. We changed our minds about going the northern route. We decided to go the southern route, after all."

"So I see," said Gerald, drily.

Tully caught the significance of the tone, and flushed angrily.

"What do you mean?" he asked, sharply. "Do you intend to insinuate that I intended to come this way, all the time?"

"I haven't said so," replied Gerald, quietly.

Then he and Sandy leaped to the sidewalk and entered the hotel, and Tully and Seldon started to get into their automobile, but hesitated, after Tully said something to his companion in a low voice, and then Tully stepped to the side of Gerald's machine gave a glance up and then down the street, after which he reached under, fumbled a few moments and then got up and hastened to his car and got in, Seldon already having done so.

"Now, if they don't discover that the nut is nearly off, they will have a balky machine on their hands before they have been gone an hour," said Tully, in a low, triumphant voice.

"There isn't much chance that they'll discover it," said Seldon.

"Not one chance in a thousand. Well, we're off again, and I'll wager that they don't overhaul us another time, my boy!"

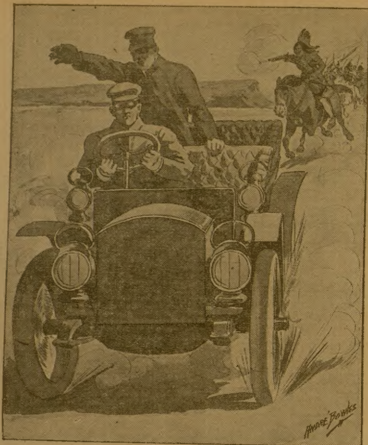
CHAPTER XXI.

CAUGHT IN A STORM.

Gerald and Sandy ate something, at a lunch-counter at one side of the diningroom, and then went out and were about to climb into their automobile, when a young man stepped up and addressed them.

"I beg your pardon," he said; "but were those two fellows in that other car friends of yours?"

"Well, they are acquaintances, though I can hardly say that I deem them friends," replied Gerald.



A bullet whistled past Gerald's head.

"Would they do you an injury if they could?"

"I wouldn't want to swear that they wouldn't," was Gerald's reply.

"Ah!" breathed the young man. "Would they have any purpose in delaying you?"

Gerald and Sandy both started and looked at the speaker in some surprise.

"I rather think they would," said Gerald. "You see, we are racing across the continent from New York to San Francisco, on a wager, and if they could cause us to be delayed a few hours, it might enable them to win."

"I see," nodding. "Well, then, you had better take a look under your machine before you start."

"What do you mean?" in surprise. "Do you mean to say that——"

"One of those fellows did a lot of fumbling underneath the body of your car before they started away, and I heard him say to the other something to the effect that you would have a balky machine on your hands before you had been gone an hour."

"Aha, I understand!" exclaimed Gerald. "Sandy," turning to his companion, "here is where you come in. Get down and see what that rascal did to the machine."

"All right, Gerald," and Sandy took off his coat, and got down and crawled under the car and turned over on his back and looked carefully, to see what had been done to the machine.

Gerald turned to the young man and held out his hand.

"I am much obliged to you," he said; "doubtless you have kept us from having a lot of trouble with our machine; possibly you have even saved us from losing the race."

"You are welcome," was the reply. "I am a believer in fair play, always, and I didn't think that fellow was giving it to you."

"You are right; he was playing us a mean, contemptible trick."

Sandy came crawling out from under the car.

"Well?" from Gerald.

"He had loosened a certain nut," said Sandy; "and it would have fallen off before we went ten miles, with the result that there would have been a tightening in the parts where there should be perfect freedom of action, and we would have had a balky machine on our hands, just as he said."

"But it's all right now?"

"Yes."

"Good! Here, shake hands with this gentleman, Sandy, and thank him for what he has done for us."

Sandy did so, and the young man again said he was glad that he had been able to do them a kindness.

He said his name was Charlie Elwood, and Gerald and Sandy told him their names and Gerald gave him his card and said that if ever the young man came to New York he must come and see him.

"I certainly shall do so," was the reply.

Then the youths shook hands with Elwood again, and climbed into the automobile and moved away down the street at a lively pace.

"Lucky for us that that young fellow was standing there and saw Tully's action," said Gerald as they bowled along.

"Yes," agreed Sandy. "He was pretty bold, wasn't he, to tamper with your machine in that manner, right in broad daylight."

"He certainly was, and I think that when we meet again, I shall have a few words to say to him about the matter."

"I don't blame you."

"They have about an hour's start of us, haven't they?"

"Just about, I judge."

"Well, we can make that up, I think."

"Yes, we will have plenty of time to do it in, before we get to San Francisco."

On they dashed, at a lively rate of speed, and they were headed toward the west. The roads were fine, and they could make good speed.

"We are going fifty miles an hour," said Gerald, presently; "if Tully is beating that, he is a dandy."

"I don't believe that he is beating it."

"Neither do I."

That evening they stopped in a small town and ate supper and inquired if an automobile had gone through there that afternoon.

"Yes," they were told. An automobile had gone through there about an hour ahead of them.

"Well, they haven't gained on us," said Gerald.

"No, and we don't seem to have gained on them," said Sandy.

"True; Tully must be driving at a great clip."

They did not linger in the town, after eating, but got in the automobile and set out again.

"I want to reach Yuma tonight," said Gerald.

The nights were pleasant, being cool and nice; but the days were hot. There was a moon, too, which made traveling easy, and they made almost as good speed as if it were daylight.

About ten o'clock, however, it began to cloud up, and presently the moon was obscured.

"Looks as if we are going to have a storm," said Sandy.

"So it does."

"That will be bad."

"Yes, so it will."

"Shall I start the lights?"

"Yes. It will soon be so dark that I can't see the road."

Sandy turned on the lights, and Gerald was enabled to keep on at almost top speed.

It grew darker, save for occasional flashes of lightning. Then the rumble of thunder was heard, and later on it began to rain.

"I guess we shall have to put up somewhere for the night," said Gerald.

"Yes, but there doesn't seem to be any place to put up, Gerald."

"We may come to a house before long."

"I hope so."

The rain began to come down in torrents, and the youths were not at all pleased with their situation.

They came to the timber, finally, there being a fair growth along the Gila River, and Gerald decided to run in among the trees, and thus be sheltered somewhat.

He slackened speed till the automobile was going at a snail's pace, and then moved in among the trees.

Suddenly the wheels on the right side of the machine went down till the bed of the car struck the ground with a thud.

"Great Guns, what have I run into?" exclaimed Gerald, as he shut off the power.

He bent over, and looked down. He could make out that the wheels had dropped onto a sort of elongated hole in the ground.

"I guess we're here to stay, till morning, at any rate!" he said, grimly.

"And maybe longer, eh?" from Sandy.

"Hard telling; but I hope that such is not the case."

Suddenly Sandy uttered an exclamation:

"I see a light!" he cried.

The conclusion of this thrilling story will be found in the Ledger issue of next week. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year, it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

Heredity and Environment.

It is said that to improve a child we should begin with the grandparents. This is only half a truth, which perhaps had better never been said. Do not waste any of your time on grandparents unless you begin on them in earliest pliable childhood. If we hope for any improvement for the human race, we must begin with the child, as the child responds more readily to environment than any creature in existence. The change may come in the first generation, and it may not. It may not show at all for many generations, but patience and constant attention will finally be rewarded in the survival of the most beautiful, the most precious or the fittest, whichever you may wish to call it.

You all know that some great force is necessary to change the aspect of minerals and metals, says the Milwaukee Evening Wisconsin. Powerful acids, great heat, elasticity, mechanical force or some such influence must be brought to bear upon them. Less potent influences will work a complete change in plant life. Mild heat, sunshine, slight change in atmosphere and greatly diluted chemicals will all directly affect the growth of the plant and the production of fruits and flowers. And when we come to animal life, especially a man, we find that the force or influence necessary to effect a transformation is extremely slight. This is the way environment plays such an important part in the development of man.

In child-rearing, environment is equally essential with heredity. Mind you, I do not say that heredity is of no consequence! It is the great factor, and often makes environment almost powerless. When certain hereditary tendencies are almost indelibly ingrained, environment will have a hard battle to effect a change in the child, but that change can be wrought by the surroundings we all know. The particular subject may at first be stubborn against these influences, but repeated application to the same modifying forces in succeeding generations will at last accomplish the desired object.

Curing Hubby.

"My wife has a new fad," announced the fat man with the red face as he cheerfully stirred the coolig mixture before him with a long straw. "She is going in for hypnotism now, and it has my sincere and emphatic indorsement. She has taken twelve lessons from a noted professor of the art, and is now a full-fledged hypnotist—or thinks she is, which amounts to the same thing so far as she is concerned. I was her first subject, and her success with me not only pleased her, but astonished her as well. At first I rebelled at being experimented with, thinking it all tommyrot; but I am now prepared to indorse the art to its full extent. She got me in a chair and then, standing in front of me, went through a lot of monkey shines before my face with her hands.

"'Now,' she said sternly, 'you cannot leave your chair.'

"Just to see what her game was I gave her the glassy eye and made no move. Her eyes gleamed with triumph, and then she said:

"'Listen to me. You must no longer drink intoxicating liquor. If you do it will make you sick. You will find it is impossible to lift a glass of the vile stuff to your lips. You cannot even enter a place where it is sold.'

"Then she brought me out of the trance by snapping her fingers and announced that her experiment was a complete success.

"Now the dear woman remains at home serenely confident that I am no longer able to indulge in the flowing bowl and my plea of being detained late at the office goes without question. Let's have another."

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Might hold us less apart
Than that one dragging moment
Wherein I knew your heart.

Now what farewell is needed
To all I held most dear.
So far and far you are from me
I doubt if you could hear.
—Ainslee's Magazine.

THE STRONG WOMAN.

During the first year of her existence the female who came to be known as "The Strong Woman" was called Hetty Davis. That was her correct name.

George Davis was a farmer, and both he and his wife were undersized people. The infant was a weakling, and the doctors frankly said that the first symptoms of measles would be the end of her.

At the age of 18 months Hetty took a start in life, and was soon known as "The Big Kid." She took on fat, and simply played with mumps, measles and whooping cough.

Her weight at 2 years was that of the average girl of 10. She grew from "The Big Kid" to the "The Big Girl." At the age of 16 they were calling her "The Strong Woman," and that title stuck to her.

She wasn't a born giantess; she became a giantess afterward. At 16 she could shoulder a barrel of cider or carry a barrel of salt off around the barnyard. Her father weighed 156 pounds, and she could lift him a foot high with one hand.

At 18 the father and mother were killed in an accident and the farm went to the daughter, and for the next twenty years she was the best-known person in the county.

Her weight went to 200 pounds and held there, but her muscle kept right on. Her height went to six feet, and no man in the county had such broad shoulders. The strong woman had the face of a man and a voice as deep as the roar of a bull.

The Davis farm was worth marrying, and there was money in the bank besides. There were young men and bachelors and widowers who were willing to marry it. They came courting and were laughed at, but at length the strong woman announced that on a certain day, if the swains would all gather at her farm, she would select a husband from among them.

The gathering numbered thirty. As they sat around casting sheeps' eyes at her she rose and said:

"Gentlemen, I want a man who can control me. The man who wins me must best me in a fair rough-and-tumble fight. Ther are no other conditions.

There were only five men out of the thirty who wanted matrimony that way. Out of the five there was a widower forty years old who could mow hay and hoe more corn than any other for ten miles 'round. He stepped out on the grass and peeled his coat and vest and spat on his hands.

According to authentic reports he was a licked man in five minutes. Not only that, but he carried a stiff neck for the rest of his life. The Strong Woman had almost twisted his head off, and none of the others came forward as No. 2.

The farm was run by hired men. Now and then, for the next two years they got impudent at times, or did not keep up to their work. They were knocked unconscious, thrown over the fence into the road, or sent away with broken bones.

It was a great highway for tramps, or had been. They came along in bunches. They stopped and demanded food. They even threatened things. Her greatest victory was over a bunch of five. After the news got abroad all tramps would go six miles around to dodge her farm.

Lightning rod men and tin peddlers who thought pretty well of themselves came that way and stopped to call the Strong Woman their kiddie and be very funny. They always went away on the run.

A defeated man of lightning came back with a middle-weight scrapper from the city and picked a fuss, and his scrapper was hammered senseless in ten minutes.

The Strong Woman paid no attention to science; she just waded right in any old way to win, and if she got her teeth fastened upon a man's ear it was bad for him.

One of her victims took a warrant for her assault and battery. He was a patent churn man, and he had been a little fresh and had some of his teeth knocked out. Four constables together went to serve the warrant. One got back home late that night with a thumb out of joint and an aching head, and the three others continued running for fifteen miles.

The Strong Woman didn't pay much attention to other women. She knew they didn't like her, and that they gossiped about her, but she continued to pass it by for years. Then a casual remark roiled her. A certain woman said that she was so homely that she couldn't catch a husband.

No homely woman ever yet admitted that she was homely, nor was there ever an old maid ready to admit that she had tried and failed. The Strong Woman sent out notice that she had hit the trail for a husband.

No one responded. On the contrary, men hid out in barns and haystacks and trembled in their shoes. Two weeks and no husband.

Then the Strong Woman bought a bear trap, covered the teeth with heavy cloth and set it at the open barn door. Three nights passed without a victim, but at midnight on the fourth night along came horse-thief so gaily and was caught by the leg.

His yells of pain aroused the woman and she lighted the lantern and went out. After taking a good look at the prisoner she turned away with the remark:

"I guess you'll do. Stay right here till morning."

He begged and pleaded and yelled, but there he staid for four hours more. Then came daylight and his captor, and she asked:

"Does it happen that you are a married man?"

"No."

"Then you soon will be. Listen to me. You'll be laid up for about a week. After that we shall be married, you and I."

"I marry you?" he asked after a long look at her.

"You will."

"I'll go to prison first!"

"You'll do nothing of the kind. Perhaps you've heard of me—the Strong Woman."

He uttered a groan of despair.

"They say I can't find a husband, but I'll show 'em!"

"But, woman, I'm a horse-thief!"

"I don't care for that. I'll break you of your bad habits or break your neck inside of a month."

It is a fact that after a week they were married. It is a further fact that he ran away and after a hunt of a month she brought him back and hammered him until he didn't get out of bed for three weeks.

He settled down then and made a good husband, and the two lived happily together for twenty years, when the Strong Woman met a death befitting her name.

A barn sixty feet long and thirty feet wide blew over on her and she was gathered to her fathers. A walnut tree or brick house couldn't have done it.

NOT SIMPLY FOR LOVE.

His name was Biles. He dropped in to see Doctor Cox, and after a few remarks about the weather and the condition of trade, he said:

"Doctor, do you think you could get me up a wart for my nose?"

"Why, really, Mr. Biles, that is such an odd question that I——"

"What I want is a large pink wart, about the size of a marrow-fat pea, and growing out of the right side of my nose a little above the edge. Do you ever grow 'em for customers?"

"I can hardly say that I do. Most people want to get rid of such things instead of encouraging them. What on earth do you want of a wart on your nose for?"

"Well, it's a kind of a secret. You haven't got a brick anywhere's about the office, handy, have you?"

"I might find one in the yard, maybe."

"Well, what'll you charge me for taking the butt end of it and knocking out four of my front teeth?"

"Mr. Biles, this is the most extraordinary conversation I ever listened to. What do you mean?"

"I want 'em busted right out; and if you could give me some medicine that'd cock my left eye a little to one side, you'd do me a personal favor."

"I'd like to understand what your object is first."

"I don't care much about letting anybody into the secret, but if you'll promise not to give me away on it, I'll tell you. You know the Widow Magee? Well, I've been sort of spoony with her for some time; and when I proposed to her she fought me off, and wouldn't tell me why. At last she said that she had made up her mind never to marry any man who was totally unlike Magee—her first. So I gradually drew out of her that old Magee had sported a wart on his nose, and that one of his eyes had got kind of twisted around trying to look at it. And he had his front teeth somehow knocked out by a bull trying to boost him over a fence. Now, what I want is to get myself decorated just like he was; and if you can accommodate me you will confer a favor.

"I'll tell you, though, there's one thing that I'm worrying myself 'most to death about. Old Magee fought in the wars, and got chopped up a good deal, and he used to wear a cork leg. Now, I've a notion that the widow has been hinting around for me to get a cork leg like his; I've pretty much come to the conclusion that if she makes a stand on that store leg, I'll give her up if it breaks my heart. I don't mind disfiguring my face a little, but a man is always kind of scary about having his legs sawed off."

"You must love Mrs. Magee very much to make such sacrifices for her."

"Well, betwixt ourselves—in solemn confidence, mind you—it isn't that I like the widow so much on her own account; but to tell you the truth fair and square, the old man left her the blamedest lot of farms, bonds, and houses, and other property you ever saw; and if I can rake that in by humoring her about these little physical defects, why, I'm going to do it. What's a wart to richness like that? I pledge you my word that if you turn me loose among that property, you can cover my nose so thick with warts that it will look like a cauliflower, and I'll never growl a particle. Now, can you fix me up around the countenance so as to suit the widow?"

"I'm afraid not, Mr. Biles."

"Oh, very well, then. If it can't be done, it can't. I reckon the best way, anyhow, is to get and to cover up the teeth with black courtplaster so's it'll look's if they were out. Then, when we're married, I'll put them right again, and the widow may howl all she's a mind to."

And Mr. Biles left to hunt up a reliable ornamental painter.

Why He Meditated.

It was in the "quick-lunch" restaurant. The little man who had forgotten to remove his ear muffs when he entered appeared to be in deep meditation. Every few seconds he would gaze vacantly across the table and murmur: "It is doubtful! It is doubtful!"

The other "quick-lunchers" became interested. "Expect some money and doubt if it will arrive?" ventured one.

But the little man shook his head sadly.

"The recovery of some sick friend is problematical?" asked another.

"Haven't friend in Chicago," responded the little man with a vacant stare.

"Thinking about the Cubs' chances of winning the pennant this year?" added a third.

"Not interested in baseball, sir."

"Then tell us what it is that is so doubtful?"

The little man held up a cup. "This egg, gentlemen. I have broken it and——"

But his questioners were gone.

"Lazy Bill" Vanderbilt.

As is well known, old Commodore Vanderbilt's principal passion was the accumulation of millions. When he gave a banquet on his 81st birthday he proudly boasted: "I have lived 81 years and have $1,000,000 to show for every year of my life!"

Naturally, such an energetic character had the utmost contempt for the thriftless. One of the regrets of his life was that his ne'er-do-well son Cornelius bore his name, and not for many years did he have a very high regard for his son, William H., often alluding to him as "Lazy Bill." So for "Lazy Bill" he purchased a farm on Staten Island, and put him to work as a farmer to wrest a living from the soil for himself and rather numerous family.

It was not easy hoeing for William, and he was often put to the severest economy to make ends meet. After he had struggled on for a number of years and had not sought any favors of his father, the old commodore began to have a little respect for him. This was considerably increased by a transaction which "Lazy Bill" put through with his father.

Of the many enterprises which the commodore was engaged in, one was in dealing in fertilizers. He used to have large loads of it moored in the East River, where the farmers drove up to load their wagons at so much per load. One day "Lazy Bill" appeared in the commodore's office.

"Well, what now?" asked the commodore, gruffly.

"My farm needs fertilizing. It's all run down."

"I'll sell you some. You can have it at the usual rates."

"Very well, father; I'll take one load." And he counted out the money, and asked for a wagon load.

"Drive around and get it when you want it," said the commodore, wishing to end the interview.

"I'll send a tug," said William. "There were no stipulations as to the kind of load. I meant a barge!"

When his son had gone, the commodore scratched his head and muttered: "There may be something in 'Lazy Bill' after all!"

Hard to Explain Away.

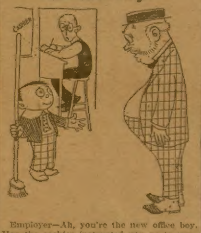
The witty Champ Clark, discussing the latest political scandal, said:

"Some of the testimony was bad, very bad; in fact unanswerable. You couldn't get around it. It was like the remark of the new parlor maid.

"The girl was a greenhorn. She didn't know the pretty daughter was engaged to be married, and when the pretty daughter's intended called after a week's absence from town, this is what the parlor maid said to him:

"'Miss Minnie you're wantin'? Well, I don't know whether she's in or not. But if you're the young gentleman that was here last night till 12:30, and got caught huggin' and kissin' her in the parlor, why, she ain't in to you no more, and never will be.'"

His Chief Duty.



Employer—Ah, you're the new office boy. Has the cashier instructed you as to your duties?

Boy—Yes, sir. I'm to wake him up when I see you coming.

Troubles Begin.

Amusing incidents following one another in rapid succession, converting a marriage into comedy, a wedding reception into a vaudeville performance, happened recently on the nuptial day of a young pair in the northwest part of the city.

The first incident occurred while the bride was hastily donning her trousseau preparatory to being whirled to the church in a carriage. The carriage happened to be a buggy, to which was attached a crippled nag, half-starved and hardly able to stand upon its legs.

The pair descended the steps of the house, passed under the canopy amid a shower of rice and various other articles. When they saw the vehicle in waiting the pair returned to the house and ordered another. More than an hour elapsed before a carriage could be obtained.

When the happy, but unfortunate pair arrived at the church they found, to their amazement, that the main item on the day's program would be delayed through the absence of the clergyman.

After half an hour's wait, during which they wasted both their patience and time, the two were married.

Incident the third occurred while they were waiting for the train to take them away on their honeymoon. The husband unaccountably wandered from the bride and became lost in the crowd.

Thinking that he was still by her side the young woman took hold of a man's arm and continued her conversation.

"Dear, they say love dies when you're married, but you'll always love me, won't you, dear?"

"Madam, I'm sorry, but I can't promise," said the man turning around. "My wife might object."

Just then her husband appeared.

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$3.50 RECIPE CURES WEAK MEN---FREE
Send Name and Address Today —You Can Have It Free and Be Strong and Vigorous.
I have in my possession a prescription for nervous debility, lack of vigor, weakened manhood, failing memory and lame back, brought on by excesses, unnatural drains, or the follies of youth, that has cured so many worn and nervous men right in their own homes—without any additional help or medicine—that I think every man who wishes to regain his manly power and virility, quickly and quietly, should have a copy. So I have determined to send a copy of the prescription free of charge, in a plain, ordinary sealed envelope to any man who will write me for it.
This prescription comes from a physician who has made a special study of men and I am convinced it is the surest-acting combination for the cure of deficient manhood and vigor failure ever put together.
I think I owe it to my fellow man to send them a copy in confidence so that any man anywhere who is weak and discouraged with repeated failures may stop drugging himself with harmful patent medicines, secure what I believe is the quickest-acting restorative, upbuilding, SPOT-TOUCHING remedy ever devised, and so cure himself at home quietly and quickly. Just drop me a line like this: Dr. A. E. Robinson, 3791 Luck Building, Detroit, Mich., and I will send you a copy of this splendid recipe in a plain ordinary envelope free of charge. A great many doctors would charge $3.00 to $5.00 for merely writing out a prescription like this—but I send it entirely free.

FOR
YOUTHFUL EYES

Tommy Helped.

Tommy Jones went to see his Uncle Samuel in the country. It was the first time he had ever been in the real, red-barn country. He had been to mountains and seashore, but Tommy did not think that they counted. Of course, he was very much interested in everything and especially in what Uncle Samuel called his "chores."

Tommy wanted to help, and though his intentions were often good, his results were sometimes disastrous.

"It seems," said Uncle Samuel, "to be his nature to do uncommon awful things."

The lawn mower was a great delight to Tommy. He lived in a flat at home, and he thought the lawn mower looked like his mother's parlor sweeper. He called it the "outdoor broom." If he could have had his way he would have leveled all nature and not have stopped at the front lawn. When he first saw his uncle cutting grass he said: "Uncle Sam'l, why don't you mow the whole place?"

"Son," said his uncle, "I have only one pair of hands and one lawn mower. I can't do more than I kin." That was true, of course, and it set Tommy thinking.

Next morning, after Uncle Samuel had gone to the meadow, Tommy Jones took the lawn mower and made up his mind to help his uncle in a fine and splendid way. It was very quiet; every one seemed to be gone to some distant spot and Tommy and the lawn mower had things to themselves. Tommy Jones fixed his eagle eye upon the landscape and finally it rested upon the vegetable garden, and the promising rows of young and aspiring eatables.

"Here is work!" said Tommy Jones, and he was right. He would mow the garden for Uncle Samuel and help him the best he could. It was no easy matter. Tommy almost wept from exhaustion and the beads of honest perspiration fell from his brow. For two hours he pushed and hauled, uprooting and crushing down as hopeful a lot of garden truck as a thrifty farmer could wish to see. After he was through, the place looked like one of earth's battlefields with the slain painfully mangled. There was only one thing to be said; everything was down but Tommy, and he was down in his spirits.

Then the people came back, and Uncle Samuel, in horrified silence, viewed the morning's efforts of his young guest. Many of the family said things calculated to hurt the feelings of an honest boy's heart, and Tommy drooped terribly. Then Uncle Samuel came to the fore in a remarkable and manly manner.

"Never mind, son," he soothed, "vegetables don't count against brains and an honest heart. You meant to help and you've worked mighty hard doing it. I was once a boy myself. Somehow I haven't remembered it so clearly for years as I do today. Why, once——" but there he stopped in time, for Tommy had such an interested look on his face that it frightened Uncle Samuel.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is a 'woman's club'?

Pa—A woman's club, my son, may be either a rolling pin or a broom stick.

If You Are SICK Let Me Help You

Mark with an X in the coupon below any of the different symptoms you have and send it to me and I will send you the treatment free, so that you can make a personal test of just what my special medicine will do.

THIS GENEROUS TEST TREATMENT

A 36-page Illustrated Book and abundant evidence from Banks, Commercial Agencies and Cured Patients— All FREE

FREE
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EVIDENCE
HOW TO GET BACK YOUR HEALTH
DR. JIROCH

Dr. F. W. Jiroch, of Chicago, who is regarded by many as perhaps the best specialist of modern times in his chosen field, makes you this liberal offer.

My Object in Offering This FREE TEST TREATMENT

—my illustrated book and evidence is to reach the sick, weak and suffering; those who have failed with other treatments; those who have given up in despair; those in remote places who are not supplied with modern, up-to-date and successful methods of curing disease.

SEND NO MONEY

Simply put a cross mark before the symptoms that you have, but place a double cross mark (XX) before your **worst** symptoms. Cut out this coupon, sign your name in full and complete address and I will do the rest. I want to prove to one influential person in a new locality that I have the real remedies and to prove my claims I will **SEND TREATMENT FREE TO TEST,** delivered by mail, postage prepaid, right to your own door without one cent of expense to you.

Coupon for FREE Diagnosis and Treatment

Indicate Your Symptoms opposite Disease with an X and Your Worst Symptoms with two XX.

CUT OUT AND MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

DR. F. W. JIROCH, Chicago.

DEAR DOCTOR:—I wish to avail myself of your offer to get a proof treatment free so I can test it in my own case. I have placed a cross X mark before the ailments for which I desire treatment.

Name ....

State plainly Mr., Mrs. or Miss.

Town ....

State ....

Street or R. F. D. or Box ....

Have you ever written me before?

....

Give your age ....

It is distinctly understood that I will never ask you to pay for the proof treatment, letter of advice, diagnosis, or for answering your special questions. I will also send you my Medical Book containing valuable suggestions, simple home rules, etc. all free—Absolutely Free—Write at once. address

Dr. F. W. Jiroch
Dept. 157
20 State Street—
Chicago
Ills.

____ If you are losing flesh.
____ If you take cold easily.
____ If your appetite is poor.
____ If you have rheumatism.
____ If you have sick headache.
____ If you have pain in the back.
____ If you are subject to malaria.
____ If you spit up mucus or slime.
____ If you are subject to biliousness.
____ If you are troubled with catarrh.
____ If your sleep does not refresh you.
____ If you feel weak and all run down.
____ If you have palpitation of the heart.
____ If you have heartburn and indigestion.
____ If you have weak lungs or cough much.
____ If you have any rectal trouble or piles.
____ If you belch up wind from the stomach.
____ If your hands and feet get cold easily.
____ If you spit up sour or undigested food.
____ If you have foul breath and coated tongue.
____ If your bowels are irregular or constipated.
____ If you have specks floating before the eyes.
____ If you have dizziness or swimming of the head.
____ If you have itching or burning of your skin.
____ If you have hot and cold flashes over the body.
____ If you have boils and pimples on the face and on the neck.
____ If you feel bloated, distressed or sleepy after eating.
____ If you are depressed in spirits and easily discouraged.
____ If you have pains in the back, through loins, hips and joints.
____ If you get weak, nervous and trembling after slight exertion.
____ If you have twitching of the muscles, limbs, face and eyelids.
____ If you have too frequent desire to pass water, or if there is dribbling or painful urination.

FILL OUT This Application and Send in TODAY.

IF YOU NEED TREATMENT

and want to be cured of Kidney and Bladder ailments, Rheumatism, Catarrh, Stomach, Liver and Bowel disorders, Heart Trouble, Nervousness or diseases arising from Impure Blood, Uric Acid conditions, etc., just fill out and mark your symptoms on the attached coupon. Cut it out and mail it to me at once.

I Will Give You a Brief Explanation of My Method of Cure

I do not offer you quack medicines, nor patent medicines, nor dope, no injurious or habit-forming drugs. Neither have I one remedy that cures everything. For instance, if a patient's worst trouble is Rheumatism and his Application Blank shows a pronounced symptom of stomach trouble and prominent catarrhal conditions; then I make up the complete treatment, not only for Rheumatism but also to take care of any other diseases or weakened condition so that the cure may be complete.

My Remedies are Results of Years of Success in Treating Diseases. They are specially prepared to act specifically on the disease itself, and the cause of the disease and the varying symptoms, and are briefly described below.

Invigorating Stomach Tonics. Especially valuable to the digestive organs, makes digestion better, overcomes pain, increases appetite, establishes the foundation necessary on which to build and maintain good health and vigor.

Blood Purifiers That Act on the System to make pure and vitalizing blood. The blood is the current of life that washes away the impurities and it must be kept clean. My remedies work in harmony with nature to clean the system of accumulated impurities and poisons so as to remove the cause of pimples, blotches, sores, itching skin, etc.

Specifics in Rheumatism—pain, soreness, stiffness, etc. There is nothing better known in medicine to get at the root of Rheumatism, for it carries off the uric acid and calcareous matter from the system and no cure of Rheumatism will ever be affected by any other action. It acts to remove the cause of Rheumatism.

Kidney and Bladder Specifics for frequent urination, scanty, painful, burning, inability to control, dribbling, etc., pain in the back, sediments and deposits in the urine. Relief for these distressing symptoms is astonishingly prompt and my medicines act on the underlying pathological conditions so as to remove the cause.

Uric Acid Solvents to dissolve and eliminate gravel and chrystaline formations that accumulate in the bladder. My treatments are remarkably effective in rheumatism, cystitis, inflammation, prostatic trouble, stoppage of urine, etc., by dissolving and eliminating irritating formations which impair the urinary functions.

Reconstructives to Build Up and make you robust, especially where the blood is thin and watery. To increase red blood corpuscles, which is what we know debilitated organs need to make them healthy and strong. Invigorating medicines for the blood-making organs and anemic, thin-blooded, run down men and women.

Nerve Tonics of the highest type certainly valuable to encourage a return of vigor and vitality in the weak and nervous. To overcome neuralgia and all forms of neurasthenias and debility and diseases of the general nervous system.

Tonic Laxatives for liver and bowel troubles, specifics for chronic constipation to restore the alimentary canal with its peculiar muscles to a normal condition by tonic action. All violent purgatives are avoided. To tone up the liver to a natural secretion of bile so that the bowels will move fully and regularly and before the blood current can absorb its poisonous properties.

Remedies For Diseased Mucuous Membranes—such as catarrhal conditions, stomach catarrh, intestinal catarrh, bronchial catarrh, nasal catarrh; acts as a healing agent on all organs such as the kidneys, bladder, genito-urinary tract, liver, stomach, intestinal canal and others having a mucous surface or lining. It gets to cleanse the system, purifies and sweetens and kills lurking germs of disease.

Let Me Send You a Proof Treatment FREE! ABSOLUTELY FREE

—and find out for yourself, from your own personal experience and it will not cost you anything to try, no express charges, not even postage. **ACCEPT MY LIBERAL OFFER.** It places you under no obligation whatever; you run no risk, for it would be foolish for me to go to this expense unless I had the successful remedies to back up my claims. Just tell me how you feel, what you want to be cured of, mark your symptoms on the application coupon with an X and your extra bad symptoms with a double XX.

SEND ME NO MONEY

—just say to yourself, "If Dr. Jiroch has so much confidence in his ability and his treatment to go to all this expense, I am going to let him try." The burden of proof is on me to help you and if I cure you I will earn your good will, then you will recommend me to other patients and in this way I will build up a practice and will receive my reward. If you want to get well and strong, make up your mind **TO DO IT TO-DAY.** In the end I know you will thank me for giving you this opportunity to try free of all charge probably the only medicine that may cure you, so you may in the future be a reference for me in your locality.

Just let me try to help you; fill out the coupon carefully, sign your name in full with your address and mail it to me without delay.

Dr. F. W. JIROCH, Dept. 157, 20 State Street, Chicago.